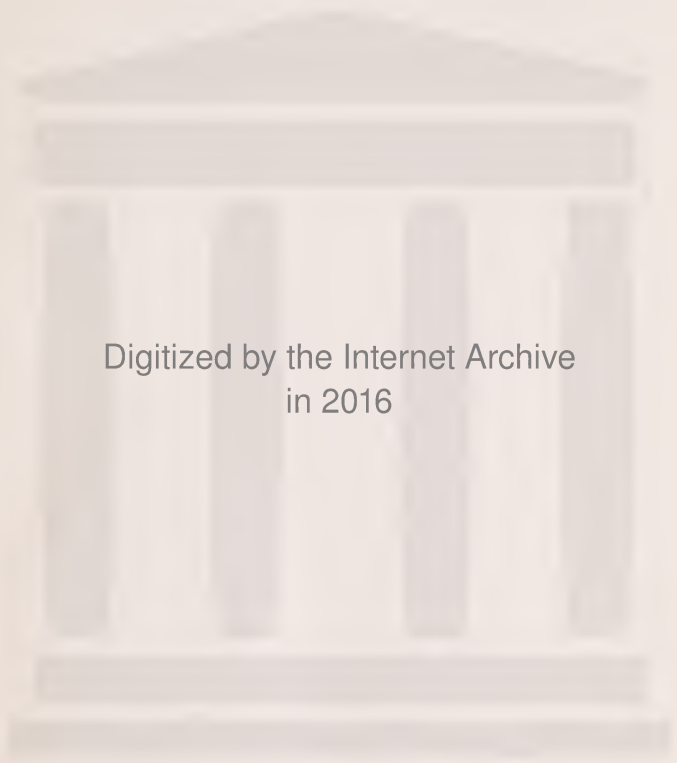


ELISABET NEY
SCULPTOR

THE DEVIN-ADAIR CO.

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ELISABET NEY
(From the painting by Kaulbach)

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ELISABET NEY SCULPTOR

BY
BRIDE NEILL TAYLOR



NEW YORK
THE DEVIN-ADAIR CO.
437 FIFTH AVENUE

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ELISABET NEY, SCULPTOR

I

A PIONEER

“PERHAPS you know the sculptress, Ney; if not, you have lost a great deal.”¹

So wrote the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, in the middle of the last century.

“Elisabet Ney is one of the most interesting of characters as she is one of the best equipped of women sculptors.”²

So wrote the American sculptor and art critic, Lorado Taft, at the beginning of the present century.

Between these two statements lies half a century of time; between them lies, moreover, the story of Elisabet Ney's career.

The German philosopher met her at the thresh-

¹ Zimmern, Arthur Schopenhauer, p. 242.

² The History of American Sculpture, p. 214.

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old of her career in Berlin. The American artist passed his judgment on the last works that ever came from her hand when her career was approaching its close.

Career! It is the one word that fitly describes her life.

In the day when none but the most audacious of women could have dreamed of such a thing, she, scorning every convention, full of a reckless originality, determined upon a career. She was a little over sixteen when she came to this adventurous decision, and every power on earth was against her.

She was a native of the historic little town of Münster, capital of Westphalia, born there in 1834. Through her mother she was the descendant of Polish exiles; on the paternal side she came from the stock which produced Napoleon's great marshal. Her father was his nephew. Besides her, there were two other children—a sister and a brother. A dashing temperament, a reckless spirit was perhaps to be looked for in a family of such forbears. It came. It passed by the boy and lighted in the heart of the little girl, Elisabet; and she, predestined as a matter

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of course to the sweet uneventful life of a German hausfrau, responded to the impulse, and—behold a rebel!

She was still, in the eyes of her parents at least, a child when one day she made the truly horrifying announcement that she wished to go to Berlin to study the art of sculpture.

It is hard for us in this different age, and land, to imagine the consternation and the bewilderment of that good religious German mother threatened thus with catastrophe. A situation comparable to it cannot even be imagined in this day of radical feminism. And when it developed that stern refusal and loving entreaty were equally powerless to turn her astonishing child from such an impossible purpose, fear and shame filled the poor mother-heart. Neighbors, friends and kindred were brought in to aid in the struggle which now developed between things-as-they-always-have-been and things-as-youth-says-they-shall be.

No girl, they told her, had ever done such a thing since the world began! Very well, then, she would have the honor of showing them the first.

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She would have to go away from home!
Nothing seemed to her more desirable.

She would have to study under men!
That, she was sure, could be borne.

She would have to go to class with boys!
Why stop to consider anything so contemptible
as boys?

It was unbecoming, immodest, indecent; it
would scandalize the world! At which she
smiled.

She would be cast uncared for into the midst
of an unbelieving world, where she would risk
the wreck of her ancestral Catholic faith. It
was unheard of, impossible! She could not go!
And they thought the matter settled.

But she had a weapon at hand quite original
for her day and time. She went on a hunger-
strike. She grew thin and pale and weak. "If
you do not let me go," she said to her mother, "I
will die." It went on so for weeks, and it began
to look as if she would really die. Then her
frightened mother turned at last in desperation
to the bishop, and besought him to bring his
august authority to bear upon this adamant-
child of hers. The good bishop hopefully under-

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took the paternal duty—and lost. He knew human nature better than the mother. He recognized an insurmountable obstacle when he came up against it. After repeated conferences with their young rebel, he came to the mother and blasted her last hope. The child would have to go.

One concession they won from her. She consented to go to Munich instead of to Berlin. Berlin was the city of her dreams because there lived and worked the great master-sculptor of that day, Christian Rauch, and she had the daring to hope that she might persuade him to take her under his tutelage. But her mother and the bishop insisted on Munich, because Munich was a Catholic city, whereas Berlin was the high court of Protestantism; because, also, they had family friends in Munich to whose care they could entrust her; and, finally, because they believed that the Munich boys were different from the Berlin boys. “And,” she said, smiling reminiscently as she told me the story, “it was true. The Berlin boys *were* very different from the Munich boys.”

“How did you come to do it?” I asked her at this point in the recital. “What impelled you?”

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It seemed to me, thinking back to the sort of world she had defied, such an amazing thing for any girl to do. I expected her to say the demand of her soul for artistic expression drove her on. But no. "I wished to meet the great persons of the world," she replied with a frank simplicity.

"And why sculpture? Of all things for a woman of that day! Why sculpture?"

She said that when she was a small child, the idea had been implanted in her mind, quite unwittingly, by her mother, who read to her the story of the young girl Sabina von Steinbach working beside her father to help him chisel out statues for the adornment of Strassburg Cathedral.

In all this there is no mention of her father, but, no doubt, he had more than a little to do with her original plan of life. In the first place, he had some inclination toward art—no matter how little—for he carved in wood for his own amusement. She, rather than the boy, was his chosen companion, and something of the intense individuality which was always the most striking characteristic of her life, distinguished him also.

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She told me once that he always wore a hat and cloak made after his own design by a neighboring tailor—something entirely unlike anything worn by other men of that day. She followed her father's example in this, as perhaps in many other things, and very early in life began to trouble her mother by insisting on having her clothes fashioned according to her own ideas. In her later years, she used to love to tell a funny anecdote which grew out of this custom of hers.

She was walking out with her father one day, while she was still quite a little girl, when another little girl, passing them, stared at Elisabet's unusual clothes, and then rudely snickered with contempt. Our heroine turned promptly and, catching up with the offending little stranger, stepped in front of her so as effectively to block any further progress. Then, gathering her cloak proudly about her, she revolved slowly round and round like a statue on a pivot for a full minute before the astonished little girl. "*Now*, laugh, if you wish to," Elisabet said, fixing her with a stern eye. But the little girl did not "wish to." She was scared into solemnity.

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Nothing in her whole life is more illuminating than this story. In the aggressiveness and independence which it reveals is the prophecy of almost every event of her coming career.

II

MUNICH

So, at eighteen, she went to Munich and was carefully domiciled in the home of her mother's friend. In short order she presented herself at the door of the Academy of Art, requesting entrance. The directors took one astonished look at her, and then, without a dissenting voice, said "No." But they could not end the matter thus. She stood her ground. Gently ingratiating, but firm, she forced them, whether they would or not, to argue it out with her; and, arguing, they lost. Their final stand was made on the fear that the presence of a girl in the Academy would disrupt the classes. (She was extremely beautiful.) On this objection she temporized. She would bind herself to an agreement to withdraw if any such fatality seemed to threaten. All that she asked was a trial—a trial of the masculine youth of Munich. Grudgingly, therefore, they ad-

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mitted her—on trial. Every possible safeguard was placed about her. She remained in the home of the family friend, and a professor from the Academy of Art went for her every day and paternally chaperoned her through the streets to her class and, afterward, took her home again. The Munich boys conducted themselves well in the face of the new experiment,—well enough at least to save the day for the lone girl student. They fell into a preternatural quiet the instant she appeared in the doorway of the classroom with her chaperon professor and remained more or less subdued to the end. She won. She stayed.

She made unusual progress in her classes and, so, was encouraged to cling to her original determination to devote her life to the art of sculpture. In that respect her life in Munich fixed her destiny—that and one other happening. In Munich she met Edmund Montgomery.

She herself once described to me the first time that she saw him. He was walking along the street ahead of her and seemed, to her romantic soul, like a hero just stepped out of the pages of some splendid book. Those who knew him here in Texas in his later years will not find it hard to

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understand her enthusiasm, for, even then, in the decline of life, he was a man of such a beautiful and distinguished presence that every one turned to look at him as he passed. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he fixed the attention of the æsthetic minded girl walking along behind him down the Munich street in 1852, or 1853, when he was not yet twenty. He was very tall, very slim, very straight, carrying himself with the easy grace and confidence and the high head which, to her mind, bespoke a very prince of youths, clad in black velvet with abundant blond curling hair falling to his broad shoulders. This practical work-a-day world will smile most certainly at the black velvet and the long blond hair, but romanticism was at its high tide in the Munich of that day, and Elisabet Ney was a romanticist of the most ardent type, fated so to be as much by the qualities of her own nature as by the moulding force of the influences in the world about her. Romanticism spoke in that day the language of individualism and revolt, and we have already seen how thoroughly individualistic she was, and how daringly in revolt. It offered the thrill of the adventurous. It declared for

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the warmth of the truly human as against the coldness of the classical and the conventionalized. In these its spirit was the spirit of all youth.

Ordinarily, Elisabet Ney had a singular scorn of men. She was the typical feminist. Till now, men had appeared in her plan of life only as obstacles to be brushed aside. But this picturesque and splendid youth put a new idea into her mind as to men. Even though she had only his back to study, she felt that she glimpsed an ideal. She longed to know him.

She met him shortly afterward at the house of one of her intimate girl friends. He measured up to her expectations. He passed beyond them. His lordly bearing, which had so caught her fancy at first sight, gave way before the influence of her presence to a manner strikingly deferential, which pleased her even more, and though he seemed the embodiment of refinement and extreme gentleness, yet when he spoke, she found that he echoed the revolt in her own soul. He was Scotch—kinsman to the house of Argyle—with the very blue eyes and fresh complexion of the Gael. Student of medicine at the University of Heidelberg, he was already marked for atten-

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tion, in spite of his youth, by reason of his brilliant mind and his enthusiastic adherence to the revolutionary philosophical and political theories which were then beginning to stir the world about them to the depths. He was full of the glories of '48, for, though but a lad at the time, he had participated in the uprisings of that year, helping to build barricades. He filled Elisabet Ney with unbounded admiration. It gave her a thrill of renewed inspiration to find his revolutionary ideas so much more radical than her own, and, responding to his influence, she quickly developed a plan of life even bolder and more ambitious than the already bold and ambitious one she had evolved, unaided, for herself, in her little Westphalian home town.

Marriage and the love that leads to marriage were the last thoughts in her mind, as young Montgomery found when he suggested them. Courting lovers she scorned above everything, holding them to be a mere hindrance to all she aspired to. Marriage, to her, stood for the subjugation of women. She meant to be queen of herself forever. But she had no intention of losing him out of her life. She would not take him

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for a husband, but she adopted him as her "best friend," and, as such, held him to the end of her long life. It was ten years after their meeting before he could persuade her to marry him, and then only under strong protest; but from the first hour of their meeting his influence became the controlling force in her destiny.

When one recapitulates the many resemblances which formed a bond between them, it seems inevitable that they should have been drawn together; both had the attractiveness of unusual personal beauty, brilliant minds and daring souls; behind each was the pride and power of a great family name; both were ardent idealists and both in rebellion against the limitations which the conventions of their world drew about them; both had, likewise, a truly tragic incapacity for the practical. To write the list thus, is but to say that they had no choice but to love one another.

I am not giving all this space to their love story simply because it is a love story. Of the making of love stories there is never any lack. But the love story of these two must be the very core of any sketch that can be written of them, if there is to be the least illumination whatever. It was the

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one thing which determined the course of life for both. The story of each would have been entirely different if they had never met, and Texas would never have known the unique personality of Elisabet Ney.

III

BERLIN

Two years later—in 1854—Elisabet Ney made her appearance in the art world of Berlin. She was not giving up Munich because life there was not satisfying enough, for indeed it is hard to imagine how life anywhere could be more enchanting than it must have been at that particular epoch to her and to the gay circle of friends surrounding her in the lovely setting of the Bavarian city. All that youth craves most seems to have been theirs, for, in addition to the usual amusements and social pleasures, they had, what was still more intoxicating, those higher delights of which youth ordinarily, in most times and places, can only dream: art, music, literature, science, the thrill of new ideas, and, above all, a dawning spirit of emancipation which promised the rending of every restraining bond forever.

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Cosima, the daughter of Liszt, afterward the wife of von Bülow, and, later, of Wagner, was Elisabet Ney's chosen intimate, and by this friendship she came into touch with the highest which that chief joy of German life—music—had to offer; her brilliant lover was a connecting link for her with the world of science, philosophy and political experiment; and as for literature, they not only read and studied romanticism at one of its fountain heads, they lived it. The two lovers wrote to one another in verse only, and lived poetry as naturally as, to-day, we of a harder time live prose.

So Elisabet Ney was not abandoning Munich because any other place on earth could possibly offer more of the joy of living, but because the cruel voice of ambition urged her on. The first dream of her life was still paramount. She must know the great master-sculptor, she must secure for herself the prestige of his tutelage, and time pressed, for Rauch's long career was nearing its end. It was nothing to her that all her friends warned her the plan was impossible. Rauch was known to hate the work of teaching, and rarely had he been persuaded to take a

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pupil. Attempting the impossible was, all her life, Elisabet Ney's favorite occupation. Therefore, at the age of twenty, this most ambitious of Germany's daughters made her entrance into the city of her choice, coming as an unrecognized warning of a new type of woman, asking for herself a share of life's glory, the kind of glory which the world at that time dealt out to men only.

It was like an assault upon a fortress, thus to enter upon that Berlin world of 1854! Beginning to entertain the thought of revolution in everything else, it still held to its own conservatism when it faced the subject of woman's place in the scheme of life. For a woman to break out into the world of men was shameful!

What might have been the fate of this girl iconoclast if she had not been so confident and so beautiful, it is hard to say. The quality of her confidence this story must already have revealed. Here is a description of her beauty by one who came to know her in the heyday of her youthful triumph, and loved her very much: "Very tall and slender, sculpturesque—even classic in the effect she produced—white, white as milk, with a mass of short auburn curls all over her head.

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Dressed oftenest in white lace, and carrying herself with the calm poise of a queen, but with far more independence than any queen ever dared to show; yet, in spite of this, full of a lovely grace of manner and a soft sweetness which hid the warrior-like fibre of her secret soul." In addition to all these charms she had, in speaking, a voice of exquisite quality—as musical as the most delicately played flute, yet with depth and strength also, and used with a perfection of modulation seldom heard.

No doubt this beauty and elegance and charm, added to the fact that she bore a name the historic significance of which Berlin had good reason to respect, did much to help her in her pioneer efforts against the foundations of a social structure which was built up so contrary to her liking.

She addressed herself first of all to winning her way with the great awe-inspiring king of the German world of art, the sculptor Rauch. Surprised though he may have been, he did not waste any time in argument with her. He had a quicker way of disposing of her. "Submit a composition to me, and let me see what you can do," he said shortly, and dismissed her. She accepted the

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challenge confidently, submitted a sketch very promptly, was immediately accepted, and, almost before she could realize the completeness of her triumph, found herself established by her chosen master in a studio next his own. It was a truly wonderful realization of her highest ambition. Averse though he might be to the work of teaching, once the great sculptor had taken charge of his new pupil, he devoted himself with the deepest interest to the supervision of her work and impressed an influence on her development which lasted to the end of her life.

To supplement what teaching he had time to give her, he recommended her for the honor of a scholarship in the Berlin Academy of Art, which gained her an entrance there; but not without a struggle. The same grudging, disgusted, unbelieving sort of temper; the same fear of the distracting effect on the young men in the classes; the same insistence that it was not the thing for a girl to do,—all met by the same persistence, the same gentle, immovable refusal to be denied, that had conquered in Munich two years before.

In the studio of her master Elisabet Ney found, established as a student also, the royal lady who

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in after years was to become the Empress Friedrich, the mother of the present Kaiser. The cold high mightiness treated her sister student with as much indifference as that which she accorded to the furniture about her, no more, no less. It was a bitter medicine to that young person's ambition and pride; but in the experience, however humiliating its quality, she had the satisfaction of seeing the proof of her contention that the bold road of art led toward the realization of her heart's desire,—“to know the great persons of the world.”

One of the greatest of the great personages of the Berlin of that day was Schopenhauer. He, too, like Rauch, was an old man verging on the close of his career. He was the most talked of, the most sought after, the most tantalizing of all the lions. He piqued public interest the most because he scorned it the most. Every one desired the privilege of his companionship, few were admitted to its enjoyment.

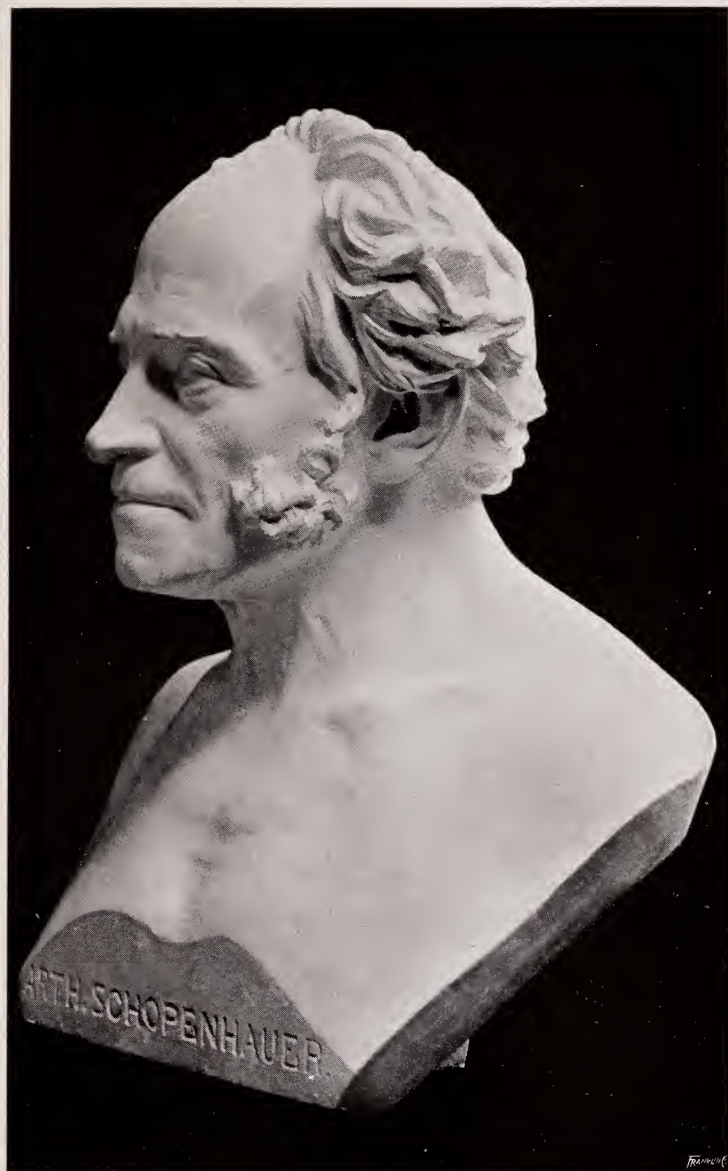
One day there appeared at the door of his apartments a young woman requesting an audience. Women had scant courtesy from the great pessimist. Brusquely the man at the door re-

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fused her entrance. But she entered, nevertheless, and penetrated to the inner sanctum of greatness. With her most gentle and persuasive air she informed him that she wished to make his bust, and he, in reply, with his more than characteristic bluntness and rudeness, assured her that her request was impossible. He had no wish to have a bust made—least of all by an unknown, over-bold “mädchen.”

Nevertheless, she made his bust, and during the many sittings which she persuaded him to give her there grew up between them a friendship which made a difference in the lives of both. The rare pleasure which she gave to his wearied old age is revealed more than once in his published letters: “Perhaps you know the sculptress, Ney; if not, you have lost a great deal.” “Very beautiful, and inexpressibly charming.” “I did not believe that there existed such a charming girl.” These enthusiastic declarations make it easy to imagine that his truest enjoyment in her came from thus finding an experience which went contrary to his life-long philosophy.

One day as she was busy modelling—lost completely in her work—she looked up suddenly to



SCHOPENHAUER
(By courtesy of Open Court Publishing Co.).

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discover him studying her with an intent quizzical smile.

"Why do you look at me so, doctor?" she asked.

"I am just trying if, perhaps, I cannot discover a little moustache. It becomes to me each day more impossible to believe that you are a woman."

He, in his turn, exerted a deep influence on the growth of her ideas. He fixed in her that contempt (which had been strong enough in her before) for accepted social ideals; but, most of all, he finished what Edmund Montgomery had begun, by alienating her completely from the religious ideals of her childhood. Definitely she abandoned them and began to try to construct for herself a theory of life and ethics made up of a mixture of idealism, materialism and radicalism, which in other women might have been wholly deplorable, but which, in her, was held in check by an essential purity of mind, fixed in her, past all possibility of eradication, by the stern ascetic ideals of her mother and her childhood.

IV

THE TIME OF TRIUMPH

RAUCH died in 1857, and Schopenhauer three years later, but, by this time, the power of their patronage, combined with her own brilliant ability, had established Elisabet Ney securely in the art world of Berlin. The list of the works she executed during the next few years is in itself a history of her triumph, a proof of its completeness: Alexander von Humboldt, Jacob Grimm, Varnhagen von Ense, Cosima Bülow and Wagner, Schopenhauer, Garibaldi, Bismarck, King George V, last King of Hanover, Liebig, Wöhler, Mitscherlich, Joachim, and King Ludwig II of Bavaria.

These works (besides many others) were produced during the next decade and a half, and the list forms a history of that period of her life during which she advanced from girlhood to com-

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plete maturity. Most of these great men became her friends and rapidly advanced her personal, social, and artistic fortunes. Humboldt was one of the chief of these, Liebig was another, but to Schopenhauer, more than to any one else, she owed it that, at the death of Rauch, her master's mantle seemed to descend on her girlish shoulders. Friendly critics began to point out that, like the founder of the Berlin school of sculpture, she "combined ideal conception with masterly technical execution." It became shortly a mark of prestige to have one's bust or statue made by "Rauch's favorite pupil." In other words, she became the fashion, and at last, as the public fancy was more and more caught by the fascination of her personality and her artistic powers, it began to be said by her more enthusiastic followers that she surpassed her master.

Few girls since the world began have known perhaps a more intoxicating success. The dream of her childhood, "to know the great persons of the world," was more than realized. But if these powerful friends directed the daily flow of circumstance for her, still more did they determine the influences which fixed her changing

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ideals. She was of a most impressionable temperament, always made partisan by affection, and from each friend that she made she received something that modified or intensified her changing convictions.

Placing the names of her friends beside the names of the subjects of her works, we could trace the history of the powers that shaped her. The parallel columns would form the story of her mind and soul.

Among her first subjects, are many drawn from her early Christian teachings: "The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," "St. Sebastian Glorified in Heaven," a "Head of Christ," "The Madonna." These represent not only the ideals of her childhood, but her gratitude to the art-loving, broad-minded bishop to whom, first of all, she owed it that she had escaped into the world. But after she was established in Berlin, we hear no more of any inspiration drawn from Christian sources. Besides the portraits of the great men about her, we find her choosing her subjects from idealistic abstractions like "Sursum," classic myths like that of "Prometheus Unbound," or literary suggestions such as "Lady Macbeth."

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Liebig's friendship, added to that of Edmund Montgomery, attracted her mind toward science, and at one time during this period she actually gave up the pursuit of her art for two years while she studied chemistry and physics under Liebig's direction. From that time forward her enthusiasm for science knew no bounds. Following Dr. Montgomery's lead, she endeavored to make it a satisfactory basis for the ethical conduct of life. She went even farther than her teacher in this and soon came to argue that science was the chief source of benefit to humanity, while the doctor, on the contrary, very chivalrously put science in the second place and accorded this palm to art.

Both she and Dr. Montgomery owed much to the friendship of George V, King of Hanover. Shortly before the royal family went into exile, when Hanover was absorbed into Prussia, Elisabeth Ney spent several months at the royal palace in Hanover making the bust of the King. The artist, Friedrich Kaulbach, painted her portrait while she was there, and she made his bust. During this exchange of courtesies the painter fell deeply in love with the sculptor, and most of the

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time of the sittings which they gave each other was taken up by his ardent attempt to win her consent to marry him. The portrait which he painted of her hangs still in the Art Museum at Hanover. This work and a portrait of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria have often won the praise of art critics as the two best examples of his work.

Strangely enough, in spite of the warmth of the painter's interest, the portrait of Elisabet Ney has a touch of cold classicism. Dr. Montgomery always spoke of it as an unsatisfactory likeness, idealized and untrue; but Elisabet Ney herself took much pride in it and loved it to the end of her days.

All this while, she and her native Westphalia had not lost sight of each other. Her success in her art had justified the bishop and consoled her mother. If their foreboding of what the outside world might do to her ancestral religious faith had come true, they were perhaps spared the full knowledge of it for some years yet. In 1862 the municipality of Münster invited her to execute a number of statues of local heroes for the ornamentation of a new town hall. She removed her

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studio to Münster and threw herself with devotion into this acceptable task. The joy of the prophet honored in her own country was hers. Apparently, by her success, she had proved her cause.

V

THE STATUE OF THE KING

THE commission to make the statue of King Ludwig II of Bavaria marks the high tide of Elisabet Ney's success. Not merely because he was King. Other kings had taken note of her (or were yet to do so); but because, of all kings, his favor meant the most to an artist. He was king of the art world even more truly than of the political world,—the world's greatest patron of art.

Her friends were overrunning with joy at her triumph, and the circle of her admiring followers grew from day to day. She returned to Munich in a blaze of social and professional glory. A noble room was set aside in the palace for a studio, spacious, ideally lighted, and altogether after an artist's own heart.

For some time she did little toward the great work in hand except to study the King as he went



MISS NEY BY HER STATUE OF PROMETHEUS IN THE STUDIO AT MUNICH.

THE STATUE OF THE KING

back and forth through the halls of the palace about his duties or pleasures—studying him probably so unobtrusively that he was not even conscious of her scrutiny. Finally, one day, she saw him pass on his way to some public function arrayed all in blue and silver in the panoply of a Knight of St. Hubert. She chose to portray him in these romantic habiliments, and the fancy pleased the King.

The work began, and, thereupon, the artist discovered what bitterness may be hid in the sweetness of a prince's favors. The King had all the capriciousness of his gathering madness. His conception of the deference due to his kingly dignity was intense, and when at the first "sitting" (which was in truth a standing) the artist stood quietly studying her royal subject, the "subject" resented instantly that calm undeferential appraisement. A cloud of displeasure overspread his countenance.

"Begin your work!" he commanded.

"I will begin, your Majesty, when I am ready," was the reply.

After this it need hardly be said that matters progressed with some lack of smoothness. For

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many sittings the King's haughty resentment cast a gloom over the progress of the work, and the artist had need of all her confidence. She realized that she had come to a real test of her powers. Her beauty, the sweet charm of her manner helped her not at all, for to these influences the young King was notably indifferent. Art was the mistress of his heart. The attractions of women played no part whatever in his life. His mother, his cousin, Princess Theresa, oldest daughter of the Prince Regent Ruprecht, and the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, also related to him, were the only women who ever exercised even a little influence over him. His betrothal to the Duchess Sophie (sister of the Empress of Austria) lapsed, so far as any one seems to know, simply from lack of interest on the part of Ludwig himself.

"I am the King!" seemed to be more and more his governing thought as his mind lost itself in fantastic dreams, and with that "I am the King" he met the objections of his subjects when his splendid extravagances began to threaten the financial standing of his Government.

It was this weakness of his which finally re-



KING LUDWIG II.

(Photo. by Prof. J. M. Kuehne, University of Texas).

THE STATUE OF THE KING

lieved the strain his cold displeasure had laid upon the artist; for as the work progressed, and his likeness gradually emerged from the clay, he saw that it was going to say "I am the King," and in proportion as the quality of majesty grew from sitting to sitting, his air of displeasure began to melt away.

King Ludwig was nothing if not lavish in the expression of his satisfaction when he found himself served according to his own fancy.

"I wish to make you a gift," he said one day near the close of the sittings. "Jewels,—jewels such as only a king gives. I will have a collection sent to you, and from it, you may choose what pleases you."

"I have no time to care for jewels, your Majesty," was the unappreciative answer. "When my friends wish to make me gifts, they send me flowers."

If he had been as like the kings of fairy-tales as he seemed, he must certainly have blasted this bold mortal then and there; but in reality, he showed himself finely human after all. He made no reply at the time to the disconcerting young woman whom he was attempting to reward; but

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next day there came a royal chariot laden to the full with rare flowers from the King's own conservatories; and from that time till her work was ended, great loads of flowers came daily to overflow her studio with bloom.

Critics have thought that the statue of the King—although rich in imagination and poetic insight—lacks the technical skill of some of the artist's other works. It may be that the circumstances under which it was produced account for this. It would have been expecting more than women's nerves can bear, perhaps, to have found the artist at her best in the face of her royal subject's majestic sulks. But to those familiar with the story, this work has always seemed a most touching "human document."

In addition to her commission to make the King's statue, Elisabet Ney had at this time another commission from the Bavarian Government. Ludwig was contemplating a building for the polytechnic institute which he designed to make one of the most noble examples of architecture in the city. For this Elisabet Ney modelled busts of Liebig and Wöhler to be placed at the entrance of the chemical department and,

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also, life size mythological figures to be cast in bronze. The statue of the King was designed to stand in the great festive hall of the building.

But here, at last, there came a halt in the story of uninterrupted success. A controversy arose between the artist and the governmental officials who had to do with the adornment of the polytechnicum, and the artist came out second-best. To give in, even in small details, when it was a question of her work, was always most difficult to her, for, up to this time, nothing in the life of success and adulation which she had known had taught her the wisdom of compromise. Neither did autocratic Bavarian officials know the word. There came a dead-lock. Her work reached a stand-still. Looking about for some way out of the dispute that would save her from capitulating, she took a step which fixed her destiny for life. She turned to her best friend for help and advice.

VI

HER MARRIAGE

DR. MONTGOMERY was at this time in the island of Madeira enjoying successes of his own. While Elisabet Ney had been building up her career in the world of art, he had been distinguishing himself in the world of science. After studying at Heidelberg and Bonn, he had finally taken the degree of M.D. at Wurtzburg and had then gone to St. Thomas' Hospital in London as lecturer in Physiology. In addition to this work, he had been pursuing original scientific investigations along biological lines.

In consequence of a dissecting wound, tuberculosis of the lungs had developed, and he had been compelled to seek a milder climate. Madeira was, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a sort of Riviera—the winter playground and health resort of the aristocracy of

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Europe. In particular, the royalty and nobility of Germany and England gathered there, and among these Dr. Montgomery had attracted a patronage which was creating for him a goodly share of fame and fortune. Upon this scene of success arrived one day, most unexpectedly, the discomfited young woman who had failed to bend the Bavarian Government into conformity with her imperious will. The situation was very critical for the "best friend." He pointed out that her unconventional visit to him would set calumnious tongues wagging. She laughed at this. Conscious of their own rectitude, she saw no reason why they might not despise the opinions of a "stupid" world. Then for the first time—and almost the last—the gentle doctor took a stand. He gave her a choice, either to marry him without delay, or to take the next boat that was leaving the island. It dawned on her that he meant what he said, and, for once in her life, she enjoyed the rare experience of submitting to a will more inflexible than her own. Without more ado, she went with him to the English Consulate and submitted to the galling humiliation of a marriage ceremony.

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When they came out from the Consulate, however, she took matters into her own hands again and checkmated her conquering lover. She calmly pointed him to his own residence, and turning her back upon him, betook herself, alone, to her own hotel. Nothing dismayed, Dr. Montgomery at once set about having a studio prepared for her, which might likewise serve as a villa for them both. When it was finished, she took possession gladly and gratefully; but at the threshold she waved him back. Thus far and no farther! and she went in alone, and shut him out.

The affair was soon on every tongue. Society was horrified. Some persons said they were married, some that they were not. Curious investigators began to invade the Consulate to consult the marriage register. There it was, in black and white: "Edmund D. Montgomery, Elisabet Ney, Sept. 10, 1865." Things were almost as bad as if they had not been married at all. The only difference was that public condemnation fell on her head alone, and not on the heads of both. But in this Elisabet Ney took entire satisfaction.

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This affair settled as nearly in harmony with her own will as might be under the circumstances, she threw herself with new ardor into her work.

She had epitomized the governing principles of her life in the motto, "Sursum." She now abandoned herself to the pleasure of giving this ideal visible expression, and during the time of her stay in Madeira she produced the group bearing that name.¹ It is in many ways her most interesting work. The atmosphere in which it was

¹ Since the artist's death a question has arisen as to just when the name "Sursum" was applied to this group, and it has been suggested that a poem by Dr. Paul Carus, editor of the *Open Court Magazine*, entitled "Sursum," first gave her the idea of calling her group by that name.

In reply to a letter asking him to throw what light he could on this point, Dr. Carus replied as follows:—"Concerning the statue 'Sursum,' I remember that Elisabet Ney told me that when 'her friend,' Dr. Montgomery, read the poem to her, when it was published in one of the first numbers of the *Open Court*, in 1887, that she at once said to him, 'Now I have a name for my group.' Whether she meant only that she had found an expression of the spirit of the group, an expression in poetic form of what she had called 'Sursum' before, or whether she had adopted the name 'Sursum' only then, I could not positively say, but I understood her at the time to mean that she had been vainly looking for a name, and that she had always meant to express the upward aspiration without having the word 'Sursum' . . . I had the impression at the time that she had in vain sought for the right word."

Whatever the truth may be on this point, there is certainly a very interesting accord between the spirit of the poem by Dr. Carus and Elisabet Ney's statue.

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created, the daily happenings of her life at the time, gave it a deeply human as well as an artistic interest. It represents two children, a boy and a girl, with heads uplifted and eyes directed upward, moving toward a height. It is a work of intense conviction and conveys unmistakably the fixed ideas of her life. The girl leads, the boy follows resting his hand on her shoulder. Both say, "Upward," in every line of their figures, but the inspiration is all from the girl. "When it comes to things ideal," says this emphatic work, "woman is the superior being. Man is but a humble follower!"

Those who are familiar with the circumstances of her marriage may see in "Sursum" her challenge to her "best friend" and also to the inflexible world about her.

Except for this note of originality, so characteristic of her, the spirit of the group seems to express a complete accord with the spirit of the Germany of her day, the spirit which a well-known student of Germany¹ has recently summarized as, "the Goethean gospel of salvation through ceaseless striving . . . the Faust-like



SURSUM

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determination to make every new experience a stepping-stone for a higher one, and thus press on to completeness of existence."

¹ Professor Kuno Francke in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1915, "The True Germany."

VII

THE TYROL—ITALY

THEY spent the following summer in a picturesque castle high up in the mountains of the Austrian Tyrol. It would not enter into the plan of a sketch so limited in extent as this one, to dwell on their stay in this romantic region (wonderful though it must have been to them) except to note one event which had a very practical bearing on all their after life.

Here comes into this story, very humbly, very unobtrusively, but very providentially, as after events proved, a sweet, protecting influence which was destined in the distant future to temper the trials of a sadly checkered existence to these two impractical idealists, and to save their old age from some of the bitterest consequences which threatened—Crescentia Simath. She was the daughter of a respectable book-binder of Innsbruck, and came to the castle in the Tyrol in

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the capacity of house-keeper. She was a year or two older than her employers, very intelligent, very appreciative of the ideal and the beautiful, but by great good fortune, very positively held down to a practical recognition of hard reality by the life-time experience of the artisan class to which she belonged.

Garibaldi's short war with Austria was being waged at this time, and Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney were his ardent sympathizers. They engaged in a secret correspondence with their hero, and Crescentia was the trusted agent who, at the risk of her life, carried the mail back and forth from the appointed place of exchange. At the close of the war, they journeyed to Italy. In Rome the ever-generous doctor fitted up another studio, and Elisabet Ney devoted herself for some months to a study of the wealth of ancient and Renaissance sculpture about her.

They also visited Garibaldi at Capri, where they remained long enough for Elisabet Ney to make a bust of the Italian revolutionist for a "gallery of notables" which she had by this time conceived the idea of building up out of her own works.

VIII

MUNICH ONCE MORE

AFTER the Italian journey Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney returned to Munich in 1867, intending to take up their stay there definitely.

Their friends of old received them with open arms. Likewise with a very lively gossiping curiosity. What were the relations between the distinguished artist and the distinguished scientist? Was she a respectable Frau Montgomery, or was she a scandalous Fräulein Ney? To all appearances the latter. She clung, with a pardonable pride, to the name she had by her own efforts made famous; and, also, she still persisted in trying to evade the logical consequences of that marriage ceremony which circumstances had forced upon her. Dr. Montgomery, humoring her with a too generous indulgence, spoke to her, and of her, as "Fräulein" Ney, and for some time after their return, still maintained a separate es-

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tablishment for her. He had by this time gathered a very comfortable fortune from his profession. In one of the quietest and most beautiful of the suburbs of Munich he purchased an elegant villa and studio for his reluctant spouse, and patiently bided his time. In this secluded retreat she worked with renewed inspiration.

With immense delight she received a commission from the King of Prussia (soon to be the first German Emperor) to make the bust of Bismarck. Having just secured the bust of the Italian leader for her "gallery of notables," she needed most of all that of his recent ally against Austria.

The two busts were exhibited at the Paris exposition the following year, where, set up on either side of the entrance to the German department, they excited no little questioning. Why the juxtaposition? Was there in it some sinister portent for an anxious, nervous non-Prussian world?

Liebig was at this period the glory of Germany. Of Munich he was the especial idol—Professor of Chemistry there since 1852, President of the Academy of Science, and Curator—

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General of the Scientific Collections of Bavaria. When Elisabet Ney returned to Munich, she found its citizens preparing to present Liebig with some gift that would be a proof to him of the honor in which he was held by a grateful public. He was asked what form it would please him to have this token assume.

"I have just seen 'Sursum,' " he said with much feeling. "Give me that!"

It was the climax to the artist's glory. She became, if possible, more than ever the fashion. She was overwhelmed with commissions to make the portraits of the distinguished, the fashionable, the great, the would-be-great.

That dream of the little girl heart "to know the great persons of the world," was now finally realized in its completeness. The "great persons" of the world of courts and politics, of the world of science, of the world of literature and art gathered in the drawing-rooms of the famous studio-villa; and nightly, at the dinner table there, immense subjects concerning every field of thought and action were debated by world-leaders who themselves were taking their part in changing the course of civilization.

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The mistress of this brilliant salon maintained a sort of royal state, admitting to her presence those who interested her, refusing admittance to all the rest. Crescentia (they called her "Cencie"), at the head of a small retinue of servants, was charged with the business of protecting her mistress from the onslaught of the horde of idle pleasure-seekers who would have ravenously consumed the time and strength which belonged to art.

Elisabet Ney had long desired to try her hand at the execution of conceptions more idealistic than the field of portraiture permitted. While still in the studio of King Ludwig's palace, she had utilized the many idle hours, which the capriciousness of her royal subject had forced upon her, by trying her hand at a study for a colossal Prometheus Unbound. This ambitious work was never finished, but in the quiet of her little studio in Madeira, she had, as we have seen, produced "Sursum," and the favor with which that work had been received had fired her with a determination to go farther into the same field. She began at this time to turn over in her mind an idea for a statue of the sleep-walking, remorseful

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Lady Macbeth, which, half-a-lifetime later, was to take shape, side by side with "Sursum," as her other most interesting achievement.

This was the period when the Munich world was torn into two excited factions over the King's lavish patronage of Wagner. Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney identified themselves with the anti-Wagnerian party. It would have seemed more consistent with their natural taste for the revolutionary in general if they had welcomed revolution in the realm of music; but their opposition was founded, most likely, on personal feeling, rather than on any principle of art.

When Cosima—the friend of happy girlhood days—married von Bülow in 1857, Elisabet Ney was bridesmaid at the wedding. The rupture of this marriage in 1869 gave Elisabet Ney the deepest pain; and Cosima's marriage to Wagner shortly afterward called forth her friend's bitter denunciation.

Dr. Montgomery sympathized to the full with his wife's grief and exasperation over the affair, and both of them became known as among the foremost of the party opposed to King Ludwig's patronage of the great musician.

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But while she was thus breaking her heart over her friend's defection from the cause of loyalty in love, Elisabet Ney herself was becoming a source of public scandal by following a course of her own. Sometime in 1869 Dr. Montgomery took up his residence with her in their villa, and as she persisted to the world that she was still the "Fräulein" Ney, a sensation of no small size followed. Her friends were mystified to the last degree.

They found it difficult to reconcile her disapproval of her friend Cosima with an apparent irregularity in her own course; and she became the subject of all sorts of hurtful gossip, which, in turn, gave rise to a series of calumnious legends about her that persist to this day.

"You are a sphinx and not a woman," said one great man of the day, whom she counted among her most honored patrons. "It is impossible to understand you!" He was out of patience with her.

Greatly amused, she impulsively planned a jesting reply quite in line with her usual originality. She commissioned a friend, who was a sculptor of animals, to model for her the body of a lion.

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Making a bust of herself, she affixed it to the lion's body, and presented this sphinx portrait to the great man who found her such a riddle. It was her sole reply.

The bust, without the lion's body, is to be seen today among her collected works in the Elisabet Ney Museum which the Texas Fine Arts Association maintains at Austin. It shows her in the prime of her beauty at the time of an almost unclouded success and happiness; but just when warnings of future disillusionment were about to sound in her unheeding ears.

Her dispute with the government over the placing of the statues she had made for the Polytechnicum was still unsettled. Her attitude against the King's party in the Wagnerian controversy had not made this old difference any easier to adjust. Added to all this, was now the public gossip about her misunderstood marital affairs. She began to grow impatient with a world which, with an ever-increasing force, seemed determined to hinder her plan for perfect freedom in the conduct of her own affairs. The life of courts and courtiers began to reveal itself as a sickly going against nature. She and the "best friend" had

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long loved Democracy in theory; they began now to hunger for the reality.

Suddenly Munich and Berlin were amazed to learn that Dr. Montgomery and the "Fräulein" Ney were about to abandon the world of fashion and art and science, which they had so brilliantly adorned, to test the joys of the crude, primitive freedom of the "uncultured" New World. Gossip took on new life, and this adventure of theirs finally supplied additional food to the absurd legends that, in time, grew up about their names.

In reality the dream which was about to lure them across the water was one with which they had played from their earliest youth—one that had fascinated many others before them. Holding firmly to a belief in the perfectibility of humanity, they had a vision, which in the most childlike simplicity they were certain was easily to be realized,—a vision of a happy community located in some arcadian spot, where, surrounded by the unspoiled beauties of nature, aided by the influence of the purest art, and cared for by a beneficent science, each individual was to develop, unhampered, according to his own nature. The result was to be a sweet harmonious group of per-

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fectured beings—refined, poetic, learned, governed by the highest ethical ideals, yet entirely independent.

The moment was ripe for a trial of their dream. Already a friend of theirs—a young German nobleman married to an American wife—was staking his fortune on the development of such a community near Thomasville, Georgia, and was beckoning to Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney to join him. He, too, had had a touch of tuberculosis and had thus been led to try out his experiment in a southern latitude. Still another determining factor in the selection of the location was the fact that the American wife, being a Bostonian, was deeply interested in the southern negroes. Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney had themselves long felt a similar interest. So, a dozen reasons seemed to point the way to the Georgia community.

Impulsively, their minds were made up. The studio-villa was hastily made ready for their absence. They meant to stay away two years and then return, whether for a mere visit, or for good, they left the future to determine. Cencie busied herself covering up the rich furniture and

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rare objects of art, storing away hangings, and safe-guarding treasures of every kind, while Elisabet Ney worked to the last moment putting the finishing touches to the marble of the King's still unplaced statue. Then the villa was closed, and, after a hasty visit to the parents in Westphalia, they sailed, in late December, 1870, from Bremen to New York, together, accompanied by Cencie only, and with the fact of their marriage still undivulged.

IX

AMERICA

THE experiment in Georgia came to its appointed end in the course of time. The particular cause of its failure seems to have been that the community was established in such a malarious location that white people could not live there.

Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney must have seen the inevitable end long before it came, for they spent much time during these first years in the United States traveling about, and examining different sections of the country. Their summers were spent in Maine; Baltimore, too, was a favorite resort; and once they went as far west as Chicago. Crescentia remained always in Georgia, and nearly died there of malarial fever.

Dr. Montgomery found something extremely congenial in the scientific atmosphere of New

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England. He was at this time growing more and more interested in metaphysical questions, and the transcendental ideals of the Concord school of philosophy were entirely in line with his own. He came to know all the great leaders of thought in Boston, and among them made many friends.

In Baltimore, too, he found a literary and scientific coterie very much to his liking.

For Elisabet Ney, the atmosphere of the new land held no such inspiration. She found no school of art anywhere which was comparable in promise with what she had left behind her. It was the hour just before the real dawn of American art, and she had no way of knowing that the dawn was coming.

Their winters they spent in Georgia, loyal to the failing experiment till it finally reached its appointed end.

Their friends at last gave up and went back to Germany. It was a grievous disappointment to Elisabet Ney. To the end of her life she disliked to think or speak of it.

Once only, do I remember to have heard her refer to this time. She summed it up in a few

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words of bitter frankness. "Oh," she said, "it was a sad failure. Much money was wasted. Many fell sick. Some died. The rest went back."

"And why," ventured a friend present, "why did you not go back? How was it possible for you to remain in what to an artist must have been a desert of exile?"

Her eyes flashed. All the fire of which she was capable was in her answer.

"Go back, and confess failure? That was not to be thought of! Our friends over there had all warned us how it would be. To go back was not possible!"

And, so, their plan for an adventure of a few years was changed. Instead of a few years, it was to be for life. It became necessary to look for a location for a permanent home.

If it had not been for Dr. Montgomery's weakness of the chest, they would no doubt have chosen a home somewhere in the East in touch with such beginnings of culture as the country afforded, and life would have developed for both, very likely, in a way more satisfactory than in reality it did develop. But they were restricted

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to the choice of some place in a mild climate. Their experience in Georgia turned them away from the southeast. They faced toward a newer and more hopeful land, and Texas fell heir to the gifted artist and her gifted scientist husband.

X

LIENDO

EVERY old Texan knows the story of Liendo plantation near Hempstead. Before the Civil War it was a famous centre of the most generous hospitality. No visitor to Southern Texas ever passed it by. It was a sort of principality, rudely self-sustaining, which its owner, Colonel Groce, had developed from the wilderness by means of an army of slaves, and where, more lordly than a king, he maintained himself and his innumerable dependents in simple abundance.

The emancipation of the slaves brought all this to an end. The negroes disappeared, or remained an unhelpful burden; and the plantation, entering on the beginning of its decline, was put up for sale.

A lifetime friend of hers has described the first time that Elisabet Ney saw Liendo. She



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(From a snap-shot photo, taken at the time of the artist's burial).

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was enchanted. It harmonized perfectly with the ideals of her romantic nature. Standing in the upper story of the big portico of the mansion, she looked out over a park of which no bounds were visible, and the care of which had kept a hundred of Colonel Groce's slaves constantly employed. To her it carried a reminiscence of the great ducal estates of her native land, with the added fascination of a close relation to the primitive wilderness from which it had so recently been reclaimed. She spread her arms out toward it all in a transport of poetic delight, "Here is where I shall live and die," she said. And, forthwith, few questions asked, the price was paid, and Liendo was theirs.

The setting up of this home marked for Elisabeth Ney an entirely new phase of her life. The break with her brilliant past was complete. A totally new interest already engrossed her. In the midst of the loneliness and disappointment with which she and Dr. Montgomery had seen the Georgia experiment wear along to its end, two children had been born to them—only sixteen months apart. At the time of their coming to Liendo, the elder child, Arthur (named most

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likely in grateful remembrance of Schopenhauer), was a year and a half old; the other, Lorne (named for the Marquis of Lorne), an infant of less than three months.

The coming of her children filled Elisabet Ney with a hitherto undreamed of enthusiasm. She forgot her art; she forgot her overwhelming ambition and pride—or, rather, more truly speaking, she transferred all that ambition and pride from herself to her children. They were wonderfully beautiful, apparently perfect children. In their mother's mind the ever-present, beloved dream of making over an unsatisfactory world according to a pattern which she had long ago accepted from her husband, took on a more inspiring promise than before. Her children were to be the instruments through which she and Dr. Montgomery were to secure the immortalization of their humanitarian ideas.

To the day of his death, Dr. Montgomery loved to dwell on this period of their lives, and to talk about it to their friends. "She was a wonderful mother," he used to say, "the most passionately devoted that could be imagined."

How she herself felt about the pre-occupation

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of this time comes out plainly in a reply she made many years later in Austin to some one who expressed amazement that an artist with such a record of success behind her could have so completely given up the pursuit of art for all those years. "I was busy with a more important art," she replied, "the art of moulding flesh and blood."

During the first summer on the plantation, Arthur fell ill. In the autumn, he died.

The sorrowing parents cremated the body on a funeral pyre built on the lawn before the house, and the ashes remained in Dr. Montgomery's possession till his own death many long years after, when they were buried with him in the same casket. Elisabet Ney had her own special memento. It was kept sacredly hidden away in a little leather trunk which was always near her. After her death, Lorne, thinking to find some specially valued treasure in the mysteriously prized trunk, opened it in the studio at Austin. There, carefully wrapped and packed, lay a plaster cast of the dead body of little Arthur. Nothing else.

This crushing blow dealt them by the death of their child, dashed, for the time being, the ardor

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with which they had begun to work out their dreams in their new environment; but by degrees, though greatly saddened and sobered, they came back again to the point of eager social experiment from which sudden sorrow had deflected them, and took up once more the course of life they had agreed upon.

Meantime, to the people of Waller County and the neighboring village of Hempstead, the new owners of Liendo offered food for unending speculation.

There were two minds about the distinguished immigrants corresponding to two distinct classes of neighbors.

Scattered here and there among the people of the Southern Texas of that day, were to be found men and women of unusual culture and refinement, who contrived somehow to keep themselves in touch, no matter how precariously, with the world of literature and science. They knew, even if dimly, the trend of thought in the great world centres, and were keenly interested in every new idea. Far away from any educational centre, they had to be their own guides, and, with the generosity of the wilderness, they shared

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with one another whatever mental treasures came their way. To these arrived the new owners of Liendo, literally like beings from another sphere. It was a really thrilling experience to meet and talk with a man and woman who had actually known the great lights of art, literature, science and politics at the very centre of the world's activities. It was a mystery, that gave them unending occupation in trying to probe it, why a man who had known and worked beside a Darwin and a Liebig should come to bury himself in the obscurity of what Texans themselves agreed was the "jumping-off place" of civilization. It was a still greater mystery that a woman who had known the professional and social glories of the most distinguished society of Europe should be willing to share this unexplainable exile.

The recollections of friends who were among the first to know them in those earliest days give many interesting details of the life at Liendo and the impression it made on people far and near.

Elisabet Ney was at the very height of her matured beauty, distinction and pride. As chatelaine of the newly acquired estate, she satis-

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fied the imagination of the most romantic minded visitor. Then, as always, she wore a fashion of dress all her own—modelled on Greek lines, white, gold-bordered, flowing, sculpturesque, of a classic simplicity. Of Dr. Montgomery's impressive appearance I have already spoken. The child, fully as beautiful and distinguished in looks and bearing as his parents, was also dressed with a freedom from conventional notions which added to the interest he excited in all who saw him. Cencie, the fourth member of the unusual group, was in every way an harmonious element. Handsome, strong, and intelligent in appearance, while in manner reflecting perfectly the unconscious air of fine breeding which flowered out into a beautiful courtesy in each one of them, she did her part, without knowing it, in helping to create the atmosphere of cosmopolitan elegance and idealism which soon made the big rude mansion a centre as full of interest, though of such a different character, as ever it had been in the famous days before the war. To it, the mentally hungry journeyed like pilgrims, from plantations and villages and towns, far and near, to fill themselves full of a knowledge more alive

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than ever comes from books. Friendships based on the love of things ideal were founded then which endured through the lifetimes of those who made them.

But these were of the few. The general public, less intellectual, more direct, appraised their new neighbors according to a different standard. When people heard Dr. Montgomery speak of the mother of his children as "Miss" Ney, they jumped to the shocked conclusion that they had to do with a pair of audacious "free-lovers." It was a new word then, standing for the latest and most radical of ideas, and, in this day of lax "broadness," there is no way of describing the horror which such a situation excited.

In Munich Dr. Montgomery had had to bear the brunt of public condemnation for their misunderstood relations. A friend who knew them from the beginning said, "In Europe everything was forgiven to the artist, so they blamed the doctor; but in America, everything was forgiven to the man, so they blamed Miss Ney." Likewise it was the woman whom public opinion censured when it developed that they were in revolt against all orthodox religion. As in the other

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case, they held the man to a less severe account, but a woman without religion was a monstrosity! To the dreadful name of "free-lover," a shocked public added the still more dreadful one of "atheist." She, with her usual proud scorn of the "narrow" and the "uncultured," found only amusement in the sensation she excited, and refused, as she had ever done, to acknowledge her marriage, or in any other way to explain or defend herself. As a result, she began her life in her new home a widely discredited woman. She realized this but slightly, and cared not at all. In her reckless pride she estimated these of her neighbors who held such disapproving opinions of her as mere barbarians. That, in the future, they were to have any power to influence her fate was, naturally, to her a possibility undreamed of; and there was no prophet near to hint a warning. Both she and Dr. Montgomery rejoiced like children at being freed from the hampering force which the tyrant in Monarchy had exerted on all their activities in the land they had left. They were yet to learn of that tyrant hid in Democracy which hampers with a greater force in the land to which they had come. Even

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then it was preparing for them the tragedy of their after-lives, little though either suspected it.

Together, with great unanimity of purpose, heartened by the friendship of the few, undismayed by the disapproval of the many, they threw themselves into the duties of their new life. They devoted their best energies to the study and development of their child, to learning the ways of farming in a land of primitive methods, and to the education and general uplift of the negroes abounding on every side.

Dr. Montgomery soon took his natural place as a leader in the public affairs of Waller County. His impressive personality, his gentle, smiling, considerate ways, his deep scientific knowledge, his ardent desire to be helpful, quickly established him in public confidence. But, most of all, he devoted himself to his scientific investigations, to which the seclusion of the new home was greatly conducive. He spent patient hours, often entire days, hidden in his laboratory, over the microscope, watching the development of the primitive forms of life, and evolving from what he saw his own original biological theories.

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He had been for years especially interested in an effort to show forth what he held to be the shortcomings of the accepted cell theory. He was busy now contributing voluminous articles to French, German, English, and American scientific journals, in which, with an ever increasing vigor, he contended against the view that "the organism or bit of protoplasm was an aggregate of more or less autonomous cells," and maintained, on the contrary, "that the whole mass was a continuous, unbroken, though more or less specialized, unit."¹

In the outcome of these intellectual struggles Elisabet Ney took the most enthusiastic interest. The thrill they supplied, made up to her for any lack of excitement she might otherwise have suffered from the complete abandonment of her own life-work. To have the "best friend" thus fronting alone the giants of science and breaking his lance against such awe-inspiring foes as Virchow and Huxley, gave unending satisfaction to her ambitious and aggressive soul.

A letter written by Dr. Montgomery shortly

¹ "A New Type of Naturalism—Montgomery," a paper in the *International Journal of Ethics*, October, 1908, by Wm. M. Salter.

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before his death to his friend, Mr. Charles A. Lane, gives a glimpse of the state of mind which at this time kept both of them happy in their crude surroundings and prevented any sense of isolation from the world of intellectual activity in which they still had the most real part of their being.

"Personally," the doctor wrote, "I am indifferent to success, though I have never doubted the outcome. The biological discoveries and the recognition of their significance have for years kept me in a glorious state of exultation that needed no outside fuel to keep it aglow."

This "glorious state of exultation" meant fully as much to Elisabet Ney as to Dr. Montgomery himself.

It is the only period of her existence in which she ever subordinated herself. Her husband and child, and their doings, were the well-spring of all her joy in life. For a few years she lived the normal life of the average woman and tested, by experience, the meaning of that "sweet domesticity" which, for uncounted ages, has supplied the great mass of woman-kind with a satisfying reason for being.

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She came as near to peace then, as such a tempestuous and wilful soul could know. With the same ardor which had hitherto characterized her work in art, chemistry and physics, she threw herself into the study of child psychology, studying, experimenting, and expecting exact results as certainly as she had ever done in her work with the soulless materials upon which she had till now expended her powers. The little boy was an exquisite child, beautiful, full of the promise of brilliant gifts, most adorably sweet and docile in his nature. She was overflowing with a confident, abounding hope in him. In the same way in which she conceived the ideal of one of her statues before she executed it, she had now in her mind a complete vision of what she was going to make of him in his maturity. That vision pictured him a man of the highest distinction, noble, disinterested, and, above all, philanthropic. She designed him to be an instrument ideally fashioned to carry forward his parents' work of gladdening and perfecting their adored humanity; and she had no more doubt of her power to mould him according to this con-

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ception than she had ever had of her power to fashion clay into the expression of a preconceived ideal.

In the midst of all this enthusiastic experimentation the tragedy of her life was preparing itself. With the passage of years it began occasionally to reveal fugitive glimpses of itself, and it centered in her child.

As he grew old enough to respond to influences outside of home he became conscious of the attitude of the public toward his mother. His little playmates twitted him with the supposed irregularity of the relations between her and his father; worse still, they made sport of what they called her "funny" clothes. They impressed on him the idea that she was "different." They made him feel that to have a mother not made in the same pattern as all the other mothers of that community was a misfortune. The poison permeated his childish soul completely. He became critical and rebellious toward his mother. She, utterly uncomprehending, increased the firmness of her discipline, only to discover that he was rapidly slipping from under any discipline she

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could impose. By the time he was twelve a rift had disclosed itself between them which was to widen hopelessly as the years went by.

Up to this time he had been educated mostly at home by tutors. But his gradually revealed rebellion against his mother's rule led Dr. Montgomery to realize that a new plan of action was called for. He decided to send the boy to a preparatory school in one of the Eastern States. Elisabet Ney rebelled violently against the proposed separation; and, for the second time in their life together, the doctor took a stand. The measures he resorted to were severe, and the struggle between the two was long drawn out, but, in the end, in spite of her passionate protestations, she was compelled to yield. Lorne was sent away to school, and with him went all that made life at Liendo satisfying to his unhappy mother.

The interruption of her enthusiastic plans for her child's development left her devoid of any object on which to exercise the ardor of her passionately active soul. The farm was ceasing to be a source of interest and was fast becoming a trial and a burden. Far from producing any in-

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come, it was yearly leading them nearer and nearer to financial difficulty. The reckless generosity with which they had poured out money on the negro had made sad inroads upon the fortune which Dr. Montgomery had brought with him from Europe; while their indulgent experimentation with the negro as a laborer had brought undreamed of complications into their agricultural efforts. The negroes had accepted the fairy-like bounty thus poured out on them, with the ingratitude of the easily spoiled children that they were, and, sadly exploiting the goodness of their benefactors, shirked, deceived, wasted, pilfered and marauded generally, utterly unable to understand or respond to the mistaken efforts so devotedly expended upon them. As if this were not trial enough to Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney, they had a still further one to face in the irritation of their neighbors, who looked on with deep disapproval at what they scornfully spoke of as a wild and pernicious dream of establishing an African Utopia in their midst. We have but to remember that the terrible days of reconstruction, with their threat of negro domination, were then not so very far be-

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hind the southern people in order to understand this severe attitude of public opinion toward these innocently blundering humanitarians.

Life was becoming a series of disillusionments. By degrees the housekeeping, the farm operation, the care of the negroes fell more and more to Cencie. Her thrift, her practical sense, her engrossment in their service, and the little boy's devotion to her, had brought her each year into a closer friendship with her employers. With each year of trial and disappointment they leaned more heavily on her devotion and practical sense.

Dr. Montgomery easily took refuge from so many troubles, in his scientific work. To him it was but a slight inconvenience that he was on the outer verge of his world. His published essays, and the lively correspondence which he carried on with the leading scientists of Europe and America, kept him in close touch with his co-workers everywhere. But Elisabet Ney had no such solace. She grew more and more restive in her wilderness seclusion. She began to hunger for her art as the only object on which she could expend her abounding energy. But

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the practice of her art depended for its growth and sustenance on a living contact with that world from which she was cut off.

Loneliness, too, began to eat into her soul. Now that her child no longer absorbed her attention she came to realize the fewness of her friends, and to miss that adulation and acclaim which had made up for her much of the delight of her life in Europe. An embittered depression of soul took possession of her. Dr. Montgomery understood and truly sympathized. They began, for her sake, to look about for some way of disposing of Liendo, in order that they might seek a more congenial home. But the plantation had deteriorated. Everything was in disrepair. The splendid park which the work of that regiment of slaves had created, had of necessity, under a newer labor dispensation, become a wilderness again. No buyer appeared. They were forced to remain where they were for want of means to leave.

XI

AUSTIN

ELISABET NEY had already chosen the place to which she longed to transfer her family.

Among the little group of choice spirits whose friendship had long constituted to her and Dr. Montgomery the chief solace in their exile, was Judge Oran M. Roberts. Nothing in their life in America more impressed them than the trust and affection which the people accorded this chosen leader of theirs. It seemed like a glimpse into that perfected society, of which these two optimists had dreamed all their lives, where the natural chief of men was the one always sure to be acclaimed.

Soon after Judge Roberts became Governor of the State, in 1879, one of the questions which claimed his attention was the erection of a new capitol. Of the many plans submitted, the one which seemed most likely to be accepted by the

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Commission, provided for the use of white limestone and the adornment of many statues. Those statues gave the Governor a decided pause. How to achieve them in a State where art had scarcely yet been thought of, was a pertinent question. He turned to his sculptor friend at Liendo. She came to Austin at his invitation, and, on the strength of her advice, the plan under consideration was accepted. Later it was decided to use the red granite from Llano in place of white limestone, and this change to the harder material forced the Commission to eliminate the statues from the plan. But the consideration of this plan for a limestone building had its bearing on the art history of Texas. It was the occasion which brought Elisabet Ney to Austin. From that time forward her heart was set on making the capital city her home. She believed she might find under the shadow of the State Government and the State University—established just at this time—a sort of epitome of that great world of science, literature, art, and live world-movement which had made her youth in Munich and Berlin so full of thrilling interest, and had offered her such brilliant opportunity.

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The capital of Texas was at this time a rudely beautiful, village-like town of something less than ten thousand inhabitants. Its society was marked by that almost religious veneration for culture which it had inherited from the Old South. But culture meant principally literature. Of art it knew little except to revere its name. True, one courageous soul, in the person of William Henry Huddle, had dared to commit himself to the profession of painting as his lifework, and, while making portraits and scenes from the romantic history of early Texas, was, at the same time, awaking some general understanding of the need of art in the life of the people. But no one knew better than he that the field Elisabet Ney now longed to enter would be, so far as any comprehension of sculpture on the part of the public went, a real wilderness. He gave his sister-artist a brother's welcome and the promise of every assistance, but it was not possible for him to encourage the hopes that were enticing her. Nevertheless she refused to be discouraged. She was compelled to cling to these hopes for the same reason that a drowning man clings to a straw.

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This was the period when the failure of her plans for the development of the plantation, the making over of the negro, and the moulding of her child, was beginning to acquaint her with the bitterness of disillusionment.

The charm with which the little capital city beckoned her, added itself, therefore, to the repugnance which she was beginning to feel for her life at Liendo and intensified her desire to leave the scene of her failures behind her and begin life over amid surroundings which she persisted in believing might duplicate for her the joys of her youth.

But many years were to pass before she could attempt to realize this dream. All efforts to dispose of the plantation failed. Money difficulties increased from year to year. The very last of the little fortune Dr. Montgomery had accumulated in Europe leaked away. Debt accumulated more and more heavily.

The plantation ran down till it seemed wilder than the wilderness.

Ten long years of waiting went by during which her impatient spirit chafed violently against the cruel bars of circumstance. She be-

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came a trial to herself, to the sympathetic doctor, to the faithful Cencie.

There are letters from her extant written at this time in which the impatience with which this unendurable condition filled her comes out with painful bitterness. In one she declares that she would rather scrub floors in the old world than live a queen in the new. The centennial exposition at Chicago in 1893 finally opened the way of escape from this unhappy situation.

A commission of women was appointed to help raise funds for a building to represent Texas at Chicago. Governor Roberts (now occupying a chair in the law faculty of the young University), brought the president of this Woman's Board, Mrs. Benedette B. Tobin, into touch with Elisabet Ney. The upshot of this meeting was that the artist received a commission to make statues of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin for the State Building at the Exposition. She was intoxicated with joy and hope. Her imagination saw opening up before her at last the goal for which she had been longing with such a piteous intensity during that long, long decade

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of bitter unhappiness. Financial difficulties, however, were in no way solved, as the Woman's Commission could agree to do no more than pay for the actual expenses of making the plaster models, while the artist contributed her own work. The Commission was as poverty stricken as the artist, but it was hoped by all concerned that, later, somehow or other, a way would be found by which the statues could finally be put into marble and set up in the State Capitol.

There is something inexpressibly touching in the avidity with which Elisabet Ney grasped this meagre opportunity. No event of her life, perhaps, ever filled her with more joy, because, unlike the triumphs of her girlhood, this modest opening came after such bitter trials, just when her need of solace, of diversion, of a chance to hope was becoming unendurable. Life practically began all over again. She established her studio in some basement rooms of the new capitol, and went to work with a will. Various drawbacks hindered; making statues in Austin, it turned out, was a very different matter from making them in Munich or Berlin. Each day

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brought its own unforeseen difficulty, with the result that when the Exposition opened at Chicago, the statue of Houston was ready, but not the one of Austin.

The Woman's Commission set up their work of art in the centre of the Texas Building with immense pride. They felt that their state had entered a new era. A work of sculpture had been made in her name which, for the first time in her history, drew the respectful attention of the outside world. The Art Commission of the Exposition came to view the work, and praised it. They offered to transfer it to the main building of fine arts, where a larger public might see it; but the Texas women could not bring themselves to deprive their own State Building of one of its chief glories, and the statue remained in the Texas Building. Thus it came to pass that, in Chicago, the Texas public made the surprising discovery that a really well-equipped sculptor had all unknown to them been hidden away in their midst for almost a generation.

The thing seemed impossible of belief. The members of the Woman's Commission asserted it over and over to the visitors who filled their

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building from day to day, only to be met by their doubting unæsthetic fellow-Texans with the question, "What would a successful artist be doing all these years in Texas?"

XII

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IN spite of the attitude of a suspicious public, Elisabet Ney had already sensed sufficient encouragement from the chosen few to justify her hope that the long awaited new era in her career was about to open. The doctor believed it too, and by their united efforts they contrived, somehow, to raise sufficient money to build a modest studio at Austin. It was located in a new suburban addition, called Hyde Park, and in remembrance of those unforgotten days in the island of Madeira, she named this last studio "Formosa," after that sweet little workshop there, in which, before she had tasted anything of failure, she had expressed her untroubled ideals in "Sursum."

The friendship of ex-Governor Roberts and of the Woman's Columbian Exposition Commit-

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tee soon brought her to the notice of such of the Austin people as took the cultural development of Texas seriously to heart, and she quickly became the centre of a group of devoted friends. In the little drawing-room of the studio a sort of salon established itself, where visitors were sure to meet the most cultivated, the most interesting, the most distinguished men and women of whom the little capital city could boast. University people, of course, were there, State officials, students and teachers of art, professional men and women, society women of the better sort, club women and, now and then, a skilled artisan whose feeling for his trade lifted him beyond the limitations of the mechanical. It was not a large group—Austin was still little more than an extended village—but it was a group whose members had a true realization of the fact that Texas had reached the point in her history where the extension of culture was one of her chief needs.

The first stage in the pioneer era was near its end, but prophets were required to reveal this fact to the public mind. The little salon in Hyde Park became the natural gathering place of such men and women as were capable of foreseeing

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the new Texas, and one conviction bound all their efforts together: they must cherish the artist they had discovered and use her as the foundation for whatever work they essayed for the art interests of the State. To do this it was plain that commissions must be secured sufficient to provide her with a livelihood, if she were not to disappear again into her Waller County seclusion. The only hope of carrying out such a purpose was through the State Government. Of private interest in art there was yet so very little. The young University had made a good beginning along the lines of literature and science, but so far as art was concerned, there was not even a hope of a beginning. It is safe to say, therefore, that the first permanently organized struggle for the complete æsthetic development of Texas began in that little studio in Hyde Park.

Struggle is the word.

The sculptor's friends began to appeal to public officials and to the Legislature for an appropriation to have the Houston and Austin statues put into marble and set up in the national and State capitols. Forthwith, the tug of opposing

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forces was on. The pioneers who had made the material State a reality found themselves confronted by a new order of pioneers who had arisen to make the immaterial State a greater reality, and antagonism was the inevitable outcome of the meeting. It was to be a long drawn out struggle. The story of it is too big to fit in here. It forms a part of that longer story which began with the first effort to make the intellectual growth of the State lead the physical growth, and which is still in the course of telling. The whole will form some day one of the most interesting chapters of our history. It is impossible for the Texas youth of today to realize what faith it took to engage in a work so apparently hopeless as that which confronted the men and women who said that the time had come in Texas to set the ideal above the material.

Art as it developed in the old world was a growth from within the soul of humanity—natural, easy, progressive. Among the semi-primitive people of the new world, more self-conscious, less docile, it had to be applied, contrary to nature, from the outside. To make it

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soak in was a bitterly hard task. The integument was so impervious, and so thick.

In addition to the discouragement which they had to suffer from the official guardians of the public purse, those who were trying to secure State aid for the initiation of this venture in the art education of the people were hindered by a spirit of suspicion and disapproval among the people themselves. The same doubting question which had first arisen at the Columbian Exposition continued to be asked now: "How comes it that if your artist is such a fine one, she saw fit to bury herself in Texas for half a lifetime? Why didn't she stay in Germany where you say they made so much of her? Why should a great, successful artist want to leave a world where she was so successful to come to a new country that had no use for art?" Natural questions, no doubt! To them no answer was at that time forthcoming. The friends of art could only point to the few examples of their artist's work for proof of their faith in her. If the artist had been a painter it would have been easier. The people of Texas found sculpture difficult to appreciate.

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But there was an element in the opposition harder to meet even than that of indifference to art. It was the personal prejudice peculiar to the provincial mind. The woman behind the artist was different from other women. In 1892 this was a serious matter, just as serious as it had been in Waller County twenty years before. If visitors to the studio arrived during the artist's working hours, they found her garbed in a black velvet tunic that came but little below the knees. It is true that—even in the hottest weather—close buttoned leggings of serge, sometimes black, sometimes gray, endeavored to supply whatever modesty, at that day, seemed to demand in atonement for such a radical abbreviation of skirts. But no Texan had ever before seen a mature woman in a garment that stopped short of her feet—most dresses trailed in the dust—and the shock was severe. During her hours of leisure they found the artist in garments long enough, and full enough, and conventionally modest enough—but still different, and, therefore, reprehensible. In public she wore a gray silk cloak, that covered her completely, and a little black velvet close-fitting head-piece draped

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with a veil of rare lace which, though fit and unobtrusive enough—was also different, and so again made her the object of disapproving notice wherever she went.

But if the world about her frowned on the dissenting fashion of her clothes, the artist herself felt in her turn a deep disgust for the manner in which the women of that day chose to apparel themselves. To the sculptor's eye, trained to a fine sensitiveness for form and line, the accepted silhouette of the mode followed the shape of some unheard of monster. From balloon sleeves, artificially extended at the shoulder, the line of the figure sloped abruptly to a pinched in waist, and then abruptly out again to full swishing folds about the feet. Hats matched gowns in unreasonableness. The irony of the situation lay in the fact that though the artist knew herself for a prophet of a better ideal in women's dress, a world of women, thus clothed against every law of beauty, freedom and comfort, marked her for a metaphorical stoning. How deeply the question of clothes is ingrained in the world's philosophy of life was never more thoroughly illustrated. In every effort they made to win favor for their

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chosen work, Miss Ney's friends met a very large stumbling block in the question, "Why doesn't she dress like other women?" And it is interesting to remember that the question was asked by men with as much insistence as it was asked by women.

If the subject of all this contention had been as young and beautiful as she was when she first appeared in Berlin and offered the conservatives there her contradiction of so many accepted conventions, she might have found the early steps in her path in the Texas capital city easier. But forty years had intervened, and though she was a distinguished looking woman and finely poised in her bearing, she had lost that beauty which catches the fancy of the unthinking crowd and had now that attractiveness only which appeals to the penetrating few.

Added to these grounds for public disapproval were the garbled tales about her that came up from Waller County. She was a "free-lover," not married to the father of her son,—or, as another version had it,—but recently married. Of the son himself and her estrangement from him, gossip made still another story, discreditable to

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both. The fact that she never spoke of him gave color to all that the public—so thoughtlessly cruel—believed against her. In her little reception room, its sole adornment, was the plaster head of a boy, which she always spoke of as the head of a “young violinist.” It was in reality a portrait of Lorne, made when he was fifteen, during one of the intervals when he was at home from school. It stood in a corner of the reception room just opposite to where Miss Ney usually sat while entertaining callers, and—all unknown to her—many a sensation-lover, seeking the thrill of the dramatic, watched her curiously during the progress of a visit and supplied his or (more generally) her own interpretation of the artist-mother’s expression as her gaze lingered from time to time on that touchingly lovely work.

Nevertheless, in spite of suspicion, misunderstanding and cruel gossip on the part of the public, in spite of official refusal to expend the State’s money for anything except what to the official mind promised “practical,” “business” results, the patient friends of art were making progress—slow, but sure. That the artist herself felt this



"THE HEAD OF A YOUNG VIOLINIST"

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to be so is certain, because in 1895 she made preparation to visit Germany.

More than two long decades had passed since the humiliation of the failure of the Georgia experiment had doomed her to exile. In all that time her heart had hungered ever more and more for the scenes of her life's greatest delight. Now at last a little measure of success made her feel that once more she might face the friends of her days of triumph without too much strain on her pride.

She had made busts of ex-Governors Roberts and Lubbock and Ross, and of United States Senator John H. Reagan. These, and those of one or two friends in private life, she determined to take with her to Europe to be copied in marble. The portraits of the State's highest officials were, she felt, documentary evidence which she could offer to her friends in the old world as proof that in the new world she had taken her natural place among the "great persons" of Texas.

In September, 1895, she sailed from Galveston.

She was going back after a quarter of a century to a longed-for world which had forgotten her. Dr. Montgomery had kept himself in the

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mind of the European public by his published essays, and his lively correspondence with scientific friends; but Elisabet Ney had allowed herself to fade completely out of memory by reason of the bitter silence which her pride had driven her to maintain ever since the failure of the Georgia experiment had introduced her to that long succession of unsuccessful ventures which had since been her fate. A story had obtained currency in her old haunts that she had been lost in a shipwreck many years before while on her way back to Europe. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that her appearance—entirely unannounced—on the scene of her former glories created a sensation.

The newspapers of Munich and Berlin quickly took up the story of her life and work, and in a short time she was once more the centre of public notice and honor. She found life so agreeable and profitable that it was fully a year before she was ready to return to her American home. During that time she completed a sale of the studio villa in Munich, gathered together most of the many works she had left behind her at the time of their impulsive de-



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(From a photograph made in Munich during the artist's visit there in 1895).

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parture for America so many years before and shipped them to her Austin studio, made portraits of some old friends and many new ones, compromised her ancient dispute with the Bavarian government and saw her statue of King Ludwig II (now long gone to his tragic ending) set up in the gardens of his famous palace of Linderhoff, and, finally, visited her brother and the graves of her parents in Westphalia.

She returned at last from this satisfactory visit to the scenes of her youth abundantly supplied with funds to meet immediate necessities, and, what was better still, with a sense of solace which somehow dimmed the remembrance of the many bitter years at Liendo.

Instead of the land of exile, Texas had at last, by some sweet transformation, become "home" to her.

This change in her comes out happily in a letter which she wrote to a Texas friend as the ship bearing her homeward was nearing the end of the journey. Describing the beauty of the September dawn in the Gulf of Mexico, she said: "It is a true joy of feeling which is mine as I awake—of expansion—such as I think

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I never felt before, or at least not since years. And though I truly am devoid of what we could call patriotism (I had this to avow over and over again in Europe) the appellation Texas has a charm for me, a charm of a peculiar kind, in nearing it, such as no other part of the wide world has; as if it constitutes the nucleus containing all in all that gives charm to life for me."

One reason for this "true joy of feeling" was, no doubt, the hopeful belief that she was at last to round out her interrupted career with honor and applause in spite of all that she had hitherto suffered in the land of her adoption.

Her hope was in reality prophetic. Complete triumph was as yet more than five years ahead in the future, but many signs foretold its coming from afar. The sharpest edge of public indifference and suspicion was gradually wearing down under the faithful work of the patriotic champions of the cause of art for Texas. By dint of continual effort they had now succeeded in making their artist known in other parts of the State. The leading newspapers had discovered her, and were contributing their influence to the work of convincing the public and its official servants that

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a good artist was a public treasure and to be used accordingly. The studio in Hyde Park was thus becoming a place of pilgrimage. Many a traveller stopped over on the way through the city for the sole purpose of seeing the sculptor and her works. Sometimes it was a man, more often a woman, anxious to help along the work of refining a crude primeval State into something more akin to the culture of older States and countries; sometimes it was an art teacher from one or the other of the many ambitious schools that were beginning to spring up all over the State, and were trying as best they might to consider the æsthetic in their limited scheme of culture; often it was some young person, boy or girl, with an impossible dream of art as a life-work. Touched with sympathy for these last, she began to urge upon her friends a plan for a school of art in Austin, to be established, if possible, in conjunction with the State University.

During this same period the University was winning its way also against the peculiar array of troubles which had hindered it from the outset. In most respects the spirit which resisted the advance of culture through art was the same spirit

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which resisted the advance of culture through literature and science. The realization of their common cause made Elisabet Ney feel that in the atmosphere of the University she found her natural element. Unofficially, she became a self-appointed factor in its life. Almost never appearing on any other public occasion, she was an unfailing attendant at every public event that took place there. Lecture, concert, commencement—whatever the occasion—the audience came to look to the lower box on the left of the auditorium for her familiar figure in its distinctive garb and to think of her as a natural part of all that was creating the cultural power of the State's highest educational forces. But no one who ever saw her there, perhaps, suspected that the University played its part in her emotional life even more strongly than in her intellectual life, or knew what heart balm she found in its surroundings. On a much humbler scale it recreated for her that life in Munich and Berlin where she had lived wholly in a world of scientists, *littérateurs*, artists, teachers and students, and where her days had been so glorious and so happy. It fed, too, her affectionate pride in the

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"best friend" to find him becoming an honored figure in the University life; for he had, about this time, helped to organize an Academy of Science among the scientists of the faculty, and he used to journey up from Liendo at intervals to take part in its deliberations, and, at one time, to serve as its president.

* * *

On January 19, 1903, the statues of Austin and Houston were unveiled with appropriate ceremonies in the State Capitol. A short time before, replicas had been unveiled in the national capitol.

These events marked the culmination of Elisabeth Ney's career in the new world. A struggle of ten years had at last triumphed. Many friends of the artist, of art in general, and of the better and more cultured Texas, had united their varied efforts to bring it to this successful termination; but the final credit for organizing and forcing the work to its desired end was due to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. They tried at first to raise funds by private subscription and by educating the public mind, but this proved to be such an uphill work that, at last, they concentrated their entire efforts on the legis-

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lature. There is no doubt that they had an important part in teaching those servants of the public something of the function which art should play in the historic development of the State.

The chairman of the Committee of the Daughters having the work in hand, was the wife of one of the most influential members of the legislature, Senator Joseph B. Dibrell of Seguin (afterward Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas). Responding to the patriotic ardor of his wife and her committee, he took up their bills with great determination, and pushed them to a prompt and victorious conclusion. Successive steps carried the necessary resolutions quickly through the Twenty-seventh Legislature, and the general appropriation bill, approved October 2nd, 1901, provided at last for the long sought for funds.

But a Governor who would look favorably on expenditures for art was likewise needed. Happily, Governor Sayers proved to be that kind of governor. Perhaps it was because his long term of service in Washington as representative in Congress had shown him what art means in the building up of the state; perhaps also it was

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because Mrs. Sayers had given much time in Washington to the study of art. Whatever the reason, he signed the bill, and the day was won. It was won not only for the placing of these particular statues which had been offered continuously since 1892, when the Woman's Columbian Exposition Committee first commissioned the artist to make them, but it was also won for whatever statues the friends of the artist might offer thereafter. Full appreciation had come at last. Indifference, disapproval, suspicion, suddenly faded away in the light of official recognition.

Before long another bill, brought before the legislature by the Texas Division of the Daughters of the Confederacy, provided funds for a memorial to be placed over the grave of Albert Sidney Johnston in the State Cemetery at Austin, and Governor Sayers accorded the commission to make this statue also to Elisabet Ney.

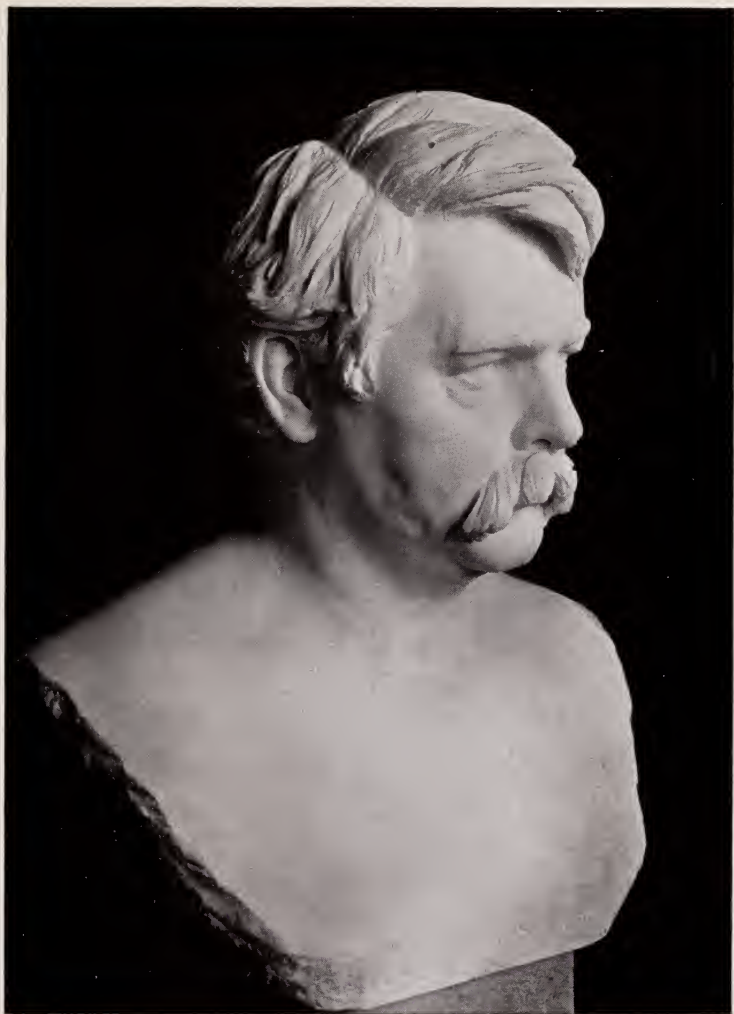
The statue of General Johnston was produced, therefore, in an atmosphere of content and security, which, coming after twenty years of truly agonized longing, gave her more real happiness perhaps than any of the far easier successes of

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her youth. It may be that this is why critics have called this statue one of her best works. To this time, too, belongs a bust of Governor Sayers—made as the outpouring of joyous gratitude—which, the critics say, also marks a high point in her artistic achievement.

And now at last she had come to the long waited for day when harmonies of inner and outer circumstance put her into the right mood for the work of executing the long brooded over conception of Lady Macbeth. A sketchy little model for this work had been for years one of the most interesting things in the studio.

The news that the long waited for work was at last in course of execution aroused a delightful expectation in all who had the privilege of the intimacies of the studio, and the growth of the model through the critical stage of clay and into the safer medium of plaster was followed with eager interest. When it had reached the latter stage, Dr. Montgomery poured out his appreciation in a sonnet of admiring interpretation, and the artist herself rested her case with the world. She seemed to feel at last that the time of folded hands had come. She was almost seventy. She



GOVERNOR J. D. SAYERS

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projected no more works ; but she made two visits to Europe, one in 1902, and the other in 1903, to have her newly finished models put into marble, going this time to Italy rather than to Germany for the purpose.

* * *

The studio had grown to be in the course of these ten years more and more noted as the chief social centre of culture in the city, and the privilege of a welcome there had now come to be an honor eagerly coveted.

Most of those who met there, intimately, had had part, one way or another, in helping along the struggle which they all believed to be primarily a struggle to bring the sense of beauty into the crude bareness of Texas life, and, now that their fundamental victory was won, a spirit of happy satisfaction permeated the gatherings there very different from that of earlier days.

A rude table with ruder benches on either side, under a fine old oak tree (now, alas, dead) on the banks of the "lake" behind the studio was the favorite meeting place.

There in the dusk of mild evenings Miss Ney, with a quite joyous hospitality, dispensed ascetic

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suppers consisting sometimes of "clabber" only, and again of dry bread, cheese and tea, seasoning the plain fare with generous outpourings of high thinking. She herself was so indifferent to bodily comforts or enjoyments that it never occurred to her to doubt the adequacy of these delightfully absurd repasts. About this *al fresco* table—the immense bull-frogs in the "lake" putting up the accompaniment of their deep bass chorus—conversation played back and forth between the artist and her guests on subjects dealing mostly with the larger aspects of life, which gave to many a listener a broadening of intellectual vision, a human livening-up of already acquired knowledge, which, otherwise, had lain dormant within as dead and dried up book-lore.

Miss Ney was at her best at such times. Those who were of her assemblages love to remember her as she was then. To the stranger she gave the impression of extreme reserve and of the cold courtesy of one who had had her training among courtiers and royalties; but among her intimates she was a totally different being—wholly human. Age had but little dampened her natural qualities. She was impulsively,



LADY MACBETH

(Photo. by Prof. J. M. Kuehne, University of Texas).

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even recklessly frank; as aggressive and independent in the revelation of her thought as she had ever been; full of open delight in whatever sympathetic agreement her friends accorded, and determined in argument when they withheld it; running over with childlike gayety when any good thing happened; demanding, at other times, with a confidence equally childlike, advice and help in her freely confessed difficulties. Sometimes these difficulties dealt with money stringency. Money leaked out of her hands like water—not spent on herself, for, living as she did with a truly German frugality, she had few personal needs, but wasted with ill-considered generosity on whoever came with a tale of need claiming gift or loan or support for any scheme or cause that seemed to be for betterment. At other times it was a difficulty arising out of a dispute with some patron who failed to understand the ethics which, in older centres of art, governed the business side of the production of sculpture. Compromise under such circumstances seemed to her the height of unfairness—it was never easy for her to see the other side of the question—and many and lively were the contentions between her

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and her friendly advisers over the wisest course to pursue in order to settle such difficulties. But nothing about her was more appealing to affection than the way in which now and then, in the midst of a hot argument, all her reckless stubbornness would unexpectedly break down under some sudden grateful recollection of what her friends had done to advance her cause, and she would give up completely, saying, "Have it as you will! I owe so much to your kindness. I ought not to oppose you!"

Gratitude in her could go no farther. To forfeit her own will was to her, ever, the supreme sacrifice.

Dr. Montgomery occasionally made one of these gatherings, and always, one might say, he participated in spirit, for he and Miss Ney kept in touch with one another by long daily letters in which they discussed not only every little personal happening, but also the great events current in the world at large, and she quoted him constantly to her friends, often reading from his letters to the assembled company.

The efforts to sell the plantation went on continuously, but no satisfactory buyer appeared,

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and the hope of having the doctor and Cencie settled with her in Austin remained a hope deferred.

To the casual acquaintance she seemed at this time a favored being, greatly to be envied; but to those who knew her intimately there was something about her that made her an object of pitying sympathy. The superficial observer saw in her a woman—unique indeed to the people of Texas—who had won for herself the same sort of distinction that gifted men achieve; those who were near to her were conscious that she herself ached more and more with the realization that she had missed what she most needed, the everyday common sweetness that life provides for women.

In her pride she did her best to hide this poignant secret in the depths of her being, but, in spite of her, the revelation of it escaped now and then in moments of extraordinary bitterness. During the long struggle for public recognition that was now won, she had been buoyed up by a hope that her estranged child, when at last he might see her art honored by the Texas public, would be won to the filial appreciation which above all

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things she hungered for. But the gulf between them could not be so bridged.

There was, too, in her at times a touching evidence of a growing desire, somehow or other to spiritualize the coldness of those purely intellectual ideals which when she was younger had seemed sufficient.

These things combined to create about her an atmosphere which made a strong appeal to the affectionate commiseration of those who were most intimately associated with her. In most cases these friends could not have formulated the reasons for the impression which she produced upon them. The fuller knowledge of her that has developed since her death makes it possible to do that only now; but, nevertheless, the impression was there. As I have said, in spite of the intense reserve with which she hid her sorrow, there were overwhelming moments when some hint of it escaped in spite of her.

One day she burst out unexpectedly to a friend, apropos of nothing in the conversation, but simply because her heart at the moment was too full for suppression: "Oh, there are moments when it seems as if one could no longer contain oneself,

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but must burst out crying aloud before the whole world!"

A blundering young friend coming into the studio one day full of a gay jesting spirit greeted her with:

"I hope I see you well and happy."

"I am very well," was the reply.

"And happy, too, I hope," persisted the blunderer.

"Happy," she exclaimed in her most beautiful voice; "happy! Who is happy?"

XIII

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE

IF Elisabet Ney had been free to choose her American home without any consideration except the requirements of her career, the story of the final epoch of that career would have been happier; the measure of her achievement would have been larger. Instead of a localized success, she would have had a national success; instead of being hampered by petty criticism she would have known that stimulation to creative power which comes with appreciation. Unfortunate it was for her that those years of her prime which should have been the richest in production were fated to be wasted in surroundings which made creative work impossible. It is interesting to ponder on what might have been if she could have cast her lot in any one of the several centers where the temper of the people was favorable to the devel-

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opment of art; for those years of her greatest unhappiness at Liendo when she was straining so uselessly against the restraints of her unfavorable environment were exactly the years of the dawn of American sculpture; when schools of art were beginning, or about to begin, or, if begun, were taking on new life, in Boston, in New York, in Chicago, in Cincinnati, and elsewhere. Even to think of her in contact with the artists who during those years laid the foundation for what has since reached such a splendid culmination is to feel certain that both she and our national art would have been the gainers. She would have brought to bear a large minded, ineffaceable femininity on the growth of our national sculpture. More important for her own development, she would have received an inspiration, a continuity of education from uninterrupted association with her brother-sculptors which, it has since become evident she needed. The waste of those years during which she was buried in Waller County was irreparable; for when finally the long hard fight made by the champions of art for Texas was won and, in 1901, the first legislative enactment secured recognition for her, she had

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reached very near to the limit of her working years, and (let the fact be emphasised), instead of the national reputation which, under other circumstances, might so easily have been hers, she had but local repute. Instead, too, of having known the joy of helping to establish some one of the several schools of art which grew up during those years of her idle obscurity, she came to the close of her career with her plan for a great school of art for the youth of Texas still no more than a dream.

Nothing reveals this more strikingly than the fact that no competent critic ever viewed her collected works in America until near the very end of her career. Then, by a fortunate accident, Lorado Taft, passing through Texas on a lecture tour, visited her studio. In his book on the history of American sculpture, which he published not long afterward, an extended notice of her was appended. Being the only permanent critical estimate of her works as a whole made by a trained critic, it has a peculiar value for the future historian of art in Texas.

The date of his visit to Austin was just at the period when Miss Ney had finished the model of

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the Albert Sidney Johnston Memorial and was on the point of beginning her statue of Lady Macbeth.

In his book Mr. Taft speaks of her as "one of the best equipped of women sculptors."¹ "There are few of our statuaries," he says, "who think so distinctly and invariably in the terms of their art as does Miss Ney. After seeing her works one is convinced that it would be impossible for her to trifle with the marble. The purely picturesque, the literary *motif*, the anecdotal—these make no appeal to her. She could not conceive a subject in such fashion, even inadvertently. Hence her sketches and compositions are admirable, as are her simply handled heads of the forceful sons of Texas. . . . These busts are generally treated in the old-fashioned way, with bare shoulders and bosoms; but even thus, and with the eyes left blank, they are strangely alive. The details of the features are epitomized with great discrimination and with an easy mastery of form which is unknown in the majority of our sculptors.

"A memorial of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston

¹ The History of American Sculpture, p. 214 et seq.

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for the State Cemetery at Austin shows the dead general lying upon the litter on which he was carried from the field; the flag of the Confederacy is thrown over the body and falls to the ground on either side. The conception is vivid; the touch of realism of the rude bier localizes and accentuates the drama, while the use of the simple drapery gives grace and, above all, sculptural unity—the face and hands being evolved as it were from a simple monumental mass. This is a work of a high order, as is the promise of a sketch of Lady Macbeth—one of the most expressive and eminently sculptural conceptions among recent American ideals.”

Mr. Taft points out that her later work is sometimes uneven in point of merit, and he leaves on the mind of the reader the conviction (already pointed out) that under different circumstances she would have reached a point of achievement higher even than that which she did attain. He says: “Her isolated life has not resulted in that growth which accompanies generous rivalry; technic is never sustained without constant reference to the best.”

Bearing this in mind, the critic's estimate of

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her work is a fine tribute to her natural gifts, and to the beloved old master sculptor who trained her, but it throws backward a tragic illumination on her as she stood on the upper porch of the old mansion at Liendo half a lifetime before and chose her home and her fate so gladly and so blindly: "Here is where I shall live and die." Texas gained much that day; but Elisabet Ney lost. No one who knows the intimate details of her life can fail to realize that the enrichment of Texas was at the expense to the artist of bitter heart sorrows and an obstructed, hindered career.

XIV

THE END OF THE CAREER

ELISABET NEY died at her studio in Austin, June 29, 1907.

At the time of her last visit to Italy she had contracted a bronchial trouble from constantly breathing in the marble dust while she was superintending the completion of the Albert Sidney Johnston Memorial. This combined with an old affection of the heart, to create complications which finally ended her life.

Dr. Montgomery had come up from Liendo at the first evidence of grave symptoms, and during the last weeks she had the comfort of his constant care.

She was confined to an invalid's chair for some time before her death, unable to move or to lie down, suffering greatly—the first real protracted bodily suffering she had known in the course of her long healthful life. As she saw the shadow of death lengthening toward her, her mind went

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backward along the course of her career to the days in her childhood's home, before that career began, and dwelt with her mother and her father. Shortly before this, she had confided to Cencie that she had begun to feel a growing remorse for her youthful attitude toward her parents. The lamp that shed this gleam of contrition backward was lighted no doubt by her own experience of maternal anguish. A few weeks before her death—just before she became entirely helpless in fact—she made a last journey down to Liendo, apparently with no end in view except to make one last effort to get a little nearer to her estranged son. The journey was fruitless, and she returned to her studio completely broken. On the day of her return, sitting beside an old friend who had known more than most others of her inner life, she let fall the veil of reserve with which, till now, she had hidden this humiliating sorrow; no word was spoken, but silent tears flowing down her cheeks unrepressed, confessed the long concealed secret of her heart and the sense of desolation which had at last overwhelmed her.

Since her first successful days in Berlin, a

ELISABET NEY, SCULPTOR .

proud self-confidence had led her to dispense with God in her life; but now, at the end, she made some small timid effort to repossess herself of the Divine Ideal which had been the governing principle of her childhood's home. Among the friends who were nearest to her in her last days were two of the Sisters of the Holy Cross from St. Mary's Academy. Between her and the teacher of art there, in particular, a bond of kindly interest had long existed. These two friends now bridged with her the long gap between the life of her career and the life before. They reminded her of a favorite prayer of her childhood and gently urged her to resume it; they suggested a little religious ceremonial for the sick, also reminiscent of that earlier time. With a hitherto unheard of docility, she said the prayer daily; more surprising still, she submitted to the little ceremonial. The intense reserve that had always characterized her kept her now from any discussion of the soul questions which so evidently stirred within her, but up from some unsuspected depths came this poignant revelation of humility—of a late-born sense of human dependence very touching now to remember.

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She was buried at Liendo under a grove of live-oaks which she and Doctor Montgomery had planted on the lawn before the house in the first days of their possession.

Less than a year later Dr. Montgomery was stricken with what proved to be a fatal paralysis.

On June 19, 1908, he wrote to his friend, Mr. Charles A. Lane: "I am now a prisoner, for good, without hope of ever being able to leave my home again. I live alone in the large colonial house, attended only by our faithful housekeeper, now seventy-four years old, who has been with us for more than forty years. . . . I am inured to solitude, and time never seems too long for me. . . . I never feel the want of any mere social entertainment, but there is no higher enjoyment for me than the exchange of thoughts with congenial companions, and one's inspiring ideas being understood as they are by your poetic penetration is rarest benison."

He lived till April 17, 1911, growing each day of those nearly three years more helpless in body, but—until very near the end—with an undiminished activity of mind. The long strain of loneliness and creeping decay began in time to tell on

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the cheerfulness with which—as his letter to Mr. Lane shows—he at first faced the prospect of his slow, lonely dying. Cencie was his nurse and friend and the daily confidante of his growing sorrow.

For, at last, as in the case of Elisabet Ney, sorrow took complete control. Dying there in sight of the grave of his beloved life-time companion, his mind—as hers had done—began to go backward over the road they had travelled together, examining, pondering, judging, and in time a bitter realization of a happier might-have-been filled him so completely that it began to slip out more and more frankly to intimate friends in letters which, till near the end, he had sufficient strength to write, and in conversations with such other friends as, at long intervals, journeyed out from Hempstead, or down from Austin to visit him; and also, as in her case, the centre about which all his thoughts revolved was that vainly hungered after son, gone long since chasing hither and thither after first one will-o'-the-wisp of fortune and then another.

Toward the end his final judgment—colored wholly, no doubt, by the thought of him—came

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out with a truly terrible frankness: "Our domestic life has been a failure," he said one day to an old friend of all three of them. "Women are not like men. They cannot defy society in its accepted ideals and escape the consequences. I began to see this long ago and to try to show her that the theories she had accepted from me with such enthusiasm must be, in her case, worked out with moderation, or, sometimes, repressed altogether. But the prudence of compromise was not in her. I could never bring her to it."

Aside from his domestic love, science had been the only other mistress of his heart. In 1907, he published a book entitled: "Philosophical Problems in the Light of Vital Organization."¹ In 1911 a second book, "Revelations of Present Experience,"² appeared.

These two works represent the matured result

¹ An extended review of this work, by Wm. M. Salter, an old friend of Dr. Montgomery appeared in the *International Journal of Ethics* for October, 1908. Chas. A. Lane, the nearest friend he had in his American Life, reviewed it in the *Monist* of October, 1908.

² Reviewed by Mr. Lane in *Monist* of July, 1911. In the same magazine the editor, Dr. Paul Carus, also a friend of the author, gave it extended editorial notice.

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of his investigations, and sum up the whole story of his inner life. They shed an illumination on his domestic life, also, which is the reason why this sketch must concern itself with them at some length, for the development of his thought governed the development of Elisabet Ney's thought very completely, and then, through her more than through him, was translated into those zealous activities which decided the course of destiny for all three of them.

In his boyhood when he first entered the life of the German universities, he was at once plunged into struggles with the problems of religion which one reviewer of his works declares drove him near to suicide. His father seems to have held to an atheistic trend of thought and his mother to one intensely evangelistic. With these conflicting forces operating in the creation of his earliest impressions, it is not surprising that in the midst of the revolutionary upheaval which he found in the German world of thought in the middle of the last century, he settled his difficulties by abandoning whatever belief in a supernatural world he had up to that time managed to retain. But he was by nature poetic and full

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of sentiment, and some sort of idealism was a necessity to him—something better than the materialism which he found all about him.

He had just arrived at this parting of the spiritual and the intellectual ways when he first entered Elisabet Ney's life in Munich in 1852 or 1853.

From that time onward the chief interest of his life lay in the business of trying to solve the question: "How do the world and man come to be?" After more than half a century of eager delving he summed up his answer in, "The primal source of Being and Becoming is, indeed, a mystery beyond human ken," and again in, "we have no slightest clue as to how it comes to be." Then out of this conclusion arose the problem of finding an answer to the "Whither" and a basis for the idealism that he craved.

Speaking to a Christian-minded friend once on the existence of the soul, he said, "Well, as for me, when I die, I expect nothing more. I am at an end," but after a moment's silence he added warningly, "Nevertheless, we must never give up the ideal."

But what ideal? There lay, for him, the great

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problem which, as his life advanced, resolved itself more and more into the effort to find some logical reason for the ethical conduct of life, some competent authority for enforcing on humanity the pain of self-denial.

Finally, he became a leader for the contention that our duty to the race in its evolution toward the something higher which he insisted was in store for it constituted a satisfactory moral basis, and, for an ideal of immortality, he offered, as the outcome of this first contention, that we must find our satisfaction in the thought that we live on in the race through whatever contribution we have made toward its evolutionary advancement. In connection with this thought there is something indescribably pathetic in a remark wrung from him as he sat beside the casket containing the remains of what had been his lifelong love, shortly before he had to consign her to her grave: "That must be a very comforting belief which those have who hold to the idea of personal immortality," he said wistfully, "I have no such belief myself, but I would not now take it away from any one who has it."

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It seems to prove the truth of the statement of one of his reviewers, that, "a cry for the permanent amid the flux of things was an instinct of his nature."¹

It was this craving to escape from ending wholly in nothingness which prompted the thought, thus expressed in a letter to a friend: "It would not greatly disappoint me to learn that my name and personality would not long be remembered; but it would discourage me to learn that after close examination my biological researches and my thoughts proved not to have probed deeper, a little deeper than hitherto, into the secrets of life and nature." But, now, when all his work was done, this hope began to slip away from him with all else that had sustained him. "Philosophical Problems" failed to attract the attention he had hoped for it, and the best that one of his most friendly reviewers could say of its conclusions was: "We cannot help thinking that Dr. Montgomery's solutions of the several problems are often unsatisfactory, however elegantly they may be worded. They discuss

¹ Salter, *International Journal of Ethics*, October, 1908.

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but do not adequately answer the questions presented, and sometimes read more like prose poems than philosophy.”¹

In addition to disappointments such as these facts seem to suggest, he had seen his chief disciple fail him in her last hour, by turning back, at least partially, toward the ideals she had abandoned in the beginning of their love, and he had a bitter suspicion that nothing but her fear of utterly disconcerting him had kept her from a complete retracement backward, away from him, to her mother and the bishop.

Against accumulating discouragement like this, he still clung as best he might to hope, writing to a friend, as his answer, “I find it quite natural, remembering how theological opinions of the crudest type are relinquished with the greatest difficulty, that it should fare in a similar manner with scientific and philosophical views.” But this courage was fated at last to desert him as everything else seemed to have deserted him. With a reconsideration nothing short of tragic he said to a friend sitting with him on one of his last days: “How we

¹ Dr. Paul Carns, Editor, in *Monist*, October, 1909.

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wear out our bodies, and ruin our brains with all this foolishness! And now I am virtually done, and have accomplished nothing to help the world or myself. . . . Centuries hence men will, like myself, struggle with the same problems, never coming nearer to a solution."

Save for Cencie, and one old friend, he died alone.

The negroes he had tried so vainly to help carried him to his grave on the lawn under the liveoaks beside Elisabet Ney, but they had to be paid to perform that last duty.

Among those who knew him best, the news of the desolation surrounding his end aroused a sense of shocked pity.

One who knew him during all his life at Liendo wrote, "Dr. Montgomery was one of the most polished and lovable characters that ever lived in this part of the State, and his memory will long be revered by those who knew him. . . . It is a pity that a man like him should have spent his last days among strangers not bound to him by any ties."

And another wrote of him: "After receiving such great honors in his youth and middle age,

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for such a brilliant intellect to be drifted out almost alone was a tragedy."

Lorne died two years later. A fall injured his spine, and months of excruciating suffering preceded his death. Cencie received his last sigh. She had been his nurse, his playmate, his confidante, and, at last, his mother. The best he had known of life he owed to her.

He left several children, but, with him, the story of Elisabet Ney's career seems to come to its natural conclusion. The grief that embittered the end of her life, the despair that clouded Dr. Montgomery's last hours were rooted in the realization that their plan of perpetuating themselves by making their child the embodiment of their dreams of world betterment had ended as it had ended.

They had seen him begin his life endowed with every gift of mind and body, every favoring fortune of outward circumstance that two well chosen parents could bestow. At the end they had stood helpless and confused in the face of a complete wreck of hope.

I wish it were possible to deal with the story of their sorrows and humiliations as Elisabet

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Ney herself dealt with them—in silence. But as well not try to sketch their lives at all as to omit all mention of that phase which the greedy curiosity of the public seized upon from the beginning, and on which—now that they are gone—it still dwells with an ever increasing demand for satisfaction.

Both Dr. Montgomery and Elisabet Ney, while desiring as much of public notice as possible for their works, were alike in the passionate intensity with which they sought to veil their private lives from all outward gaze. It seems the very climax of life's irony that they, of all others, should have been the victims of an invasion which so mercilessly despoiled them of that privacy which they held to be their most precious right. The very coldness with which Miss Ney repelled the inquisitive served only to stimulate the more their rapacious curiosity, and (as I have already pointed out) gossip, finding itself denied anything more authentic, supplied, instead, its own manufactured tales. No choice is left therefore in trying to set forth the true facts of their lives but to go into affairs which they would have claimed the right to hold inviolably

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their own. It has all been told so many times before; and generally in a cruelly garbled form.

Their relation to one another; the why of their exile to America; their son,—these are the three points which continue to pique the curiosity of the public.

Of Elisabet Ney's attitude toward her marriage, in which was rooted much of the sorrow of her later life, the all sufficing explanation must be that she was not made for marriage, though her need for affection was so great. There was in her a truly ascetic aloofness of spirit and a passionate desire for independence which amounted to an instinct—an instinct which filled her with repulsion against the "bonds" of matrimony.

The reasons for their abandonment of the old world I have already given.

On the subject of their failure to fix in their child the ideals they had provided for him, it is the most delicate and difficult task of all to dwell. Yet justice to him compels some reference to it in any discussion of his mother's life, for few ever speak of her without some word of him—usually thoughtless and unfair. Most eagerly

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she longed to have her own child honor her as the great outside world had honored her and to have him appreciate how much her career as artist meant. But he seemed, by nature, to hate her career. The older he grew, the more jealously he seemed to resent a career which had given him a mother different from other mothers. He was more than willing to exchange all the honor in which a far away world (unknown to him) held her, if he might have a mother in harmony with the requirements of that little narrow world which had the control of his happiness. The conditions of his parents' early lives had made them cosmopolitan; the condition of his life made him provincial.

Later, when he came to a more fully philosophising age, he was embittered by a conviction that he had been a sacrifice on the altar of theories which had failed. He believed himself the victim of circumstances which those theories had created; and it does seem that if it is ever right to say in extenuation of any one that he has been the victim of circumstances, it is right to say it of him.

Looking back now from the dramatic close of

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the life-story of Elisabet Ney and Edmund Montgomery to its beginning in that confusing era of democratic upheaval, when with such glad confidence, such ignorant expectation, they turned their backs on all the ideals of the past and faced their untried course with no chart except their own self-chosen theories, it seems as if the natural title of that story might be "The Tragedy of the Unguided."

When Lorado Taft wrote of Elisabet Ney that she was not only "one of the best equipped of women sculptors," but likewise "one of the most interesting of characters," he hit, in that second estimate of her, upon a reason which may perhaps perpetuate her memory fully as long as his first estimate of her may perpetuate it. She was a pioneer in a great experiment, new at that time to woman: she chose for herself at the outset the life of the intellect as divorced from the life of the heart; at the end she found that in spite of her struggle to remain true to that choice she was living the life of the heart,—and the heart bled. She made another experiment, great also, and, though old in the life of man, new then, also, in the life of woman: she chose to live the life of

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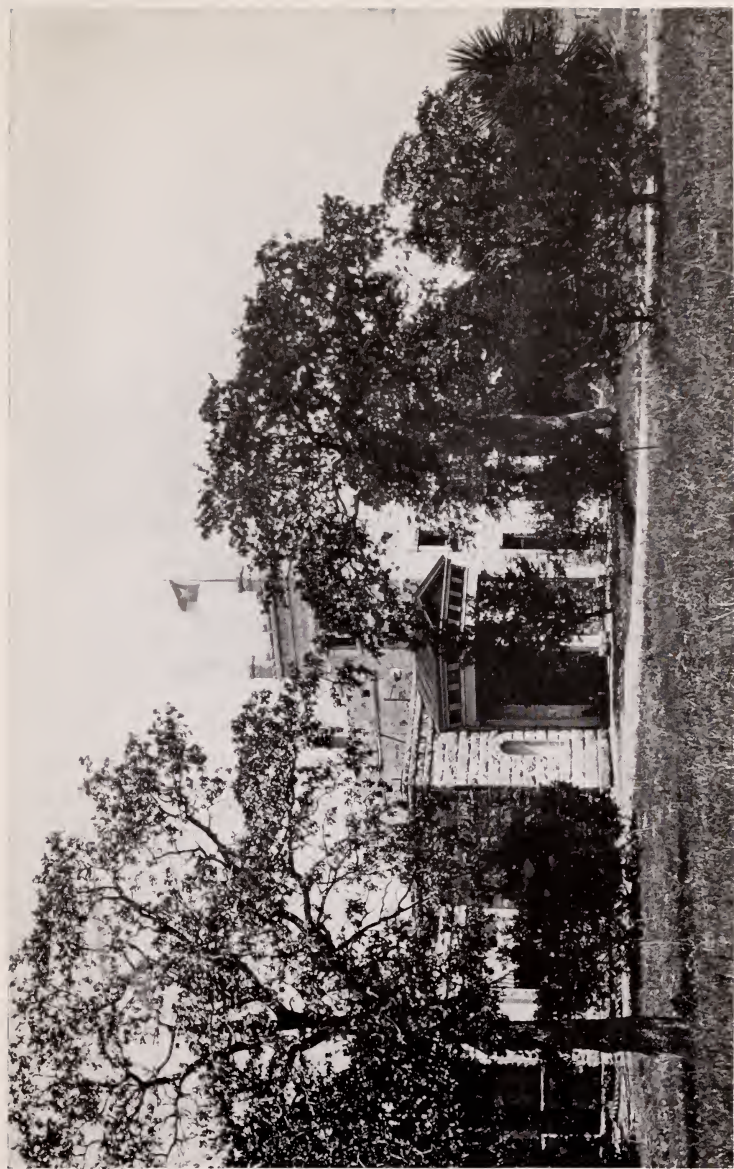
the intellect as divorced from the life of the soul; and after fifty years of it, the ignored soul stirred and confronted her with a big and painful Wherefore?—and there was no time left adequately to answer it.

These things make her fully as interesting to the student of the history of humanity as she is to the student of the history of art. It was because of them that public interest in her lifetime swirled about her, both in the old world and in the new, as about a storm center, and made her always the subject of strongly conflicting opinions. To a world half informed, as this world seems ever destined to be, the instinctive mood is that of the censor; but to that inner group of friends who knew the daily happenings of Elisabeth Ney's life more intimately, a very different temper governs the final estimate. With singular unanimity their feeling shows itself more and more, as time passes, in an immense compassion, a tender refusal to pass judgment.

CHAPTER XV

THE ELISABET NEY MUSEUM

THE studio where what looked like the most fortunate part of her American life was spent is now the Elisabet Ney Museum. Often, in her later years, Elisabet Ney thought anxiously over the probable fate of her collected works, her beloved "gallery of notables," and dreaded to think of what might happen to them after her death in a State where appreciation of art was still in its embryonic phase. Finally, she conceived the idea of leaving the entire collection to the State University. She hoped that by so doing she might, even though dead, still have some part in bringing to pass her long cherished plan for a school of art for the youth of Texas at the State University; and that her collected works by their mute appeal might prolong indefinitely the influences to this end of which she was the cause in



THE STUDIO AT AUSTIN
(By courtesy of Open Court Publishing Co.),

THE ELISABET NEY MUSEUM

her lifetime. The hope gave a great deal of satisfaction to her last years.

After her death, although she left no will, Dr. Montgomery determined to do what he could to carry out her wish; but an embarrassment arose from the fact that neither he nor the University was in a position to provide any fund for the care of the collection, which was large. At this juncture Mrs. Dibrell came to the rescue with a plan which eventually solved the difficulty. She had purchased the studio from Dr. Montgomery (who was compelled to sell it to help pay their long accumulated debts) thinking that in some way or other it might be possible to maintain it as a memorial to its originator instead of letting it deviate to profaner uses. This made an arrangement practicable by which the regents of the University accepted the gift of the collection from Dr. Montgomery on the understanding that it was to remain in the studio without any charge to the University for rental or care.

In April, 1911, a group of Miss Ney's friends organized the Texas Fine Arts Association at Austin in order, as declared in its constitution, "to preserve both the memory and art collection

ELISABET NEY, SCULPTOR

of Elisabet Ney, and to develop art in the truest sense in Texas." They took over the management of the studio and collection and arranged that the works of Elisabet Ney which are owned by the University should be under the joint control of the Regents of the University and the officials of the Association.

An annual meeting is held at the studio in April at which an address is made celebrating the life and work of Elisabet Ney, and plans are discussed for carrying on the work of furthering the interests of art in Texas. In this way the name of the sculptor is being preserved, and the appreciation of her works is growing and spreading, while through the efforts to make the Elisabet Ney Museum an art center, she is coming to have an historic significance.

At present—so poor is this rich Texas—there is no fund to keep the Museum open at all times, so the best that the Association can do is to open it at stated intervals to the public, when the members act as hosts, hostesses and cicerones to visitors, explaining, as best they may, the works of the artist and answering curious questions on the story of her life. That Reception Committee

THE ELISABET NEY MUSEUM

(all unknown to itself) is by no means the least interesting feature of the occasion, for some of the members composing it are those very friends and co-laborers who, with Elisabet Ney herself, bore for so many years the thankless burden of struggling with the impatient and contemptuous spirit of a backwoods democracy in its rebellion against their devoted efforts to show it its own cultural needs.

These annual meetings and opening days are gala occasions. At other times there hangs about the closed building—now rapidly blackening with time—a dismal air of sadness. One wanders about the lonely place with an oppressive sense of wonder that that eager, insistent personality which for so long informed it, should so completely have evacuated it, and the memory of her heartbreak obscures all thought of her triumph. But on those other occasions all this is changed. The doors stand open, crowds gather, the hosts and hostesses smile their welcome; the joy of the success they won during the long years in which they were laboring to educate the public to believe in Elisabet Ney, sparkles in their manner; they foresee perhaps still other successes

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ahead,—that long delayed school of art, it may be, the last and dearest of their artists' many philanthropic dreams; for here are the youth of Texas in great numbers, the young men and women she saw in her mind's eye coming up year after year to the State University and asking for ever widening cultural opportunity; and their growing number seems a prophecy.

At the annual meeting refreshments are sometimes served on the border of the "lake" in memory of that innocently frugal hospitality which the former mistress offered there to her friends. It is all very gay, very charming, very promising. It sends the departing visitor away with a new hint of a more fully ordered beauty soon perhaps to come into our immature civilization; and, as the glance falls on the corner stone near the door of exit, a single word carved there gives the thought so engendered an upward urge toward action, as if Elisabet Ney herself spoke out a challenging farewell—*Sursum*.

THE END

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